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The
PEACE CONFERENCE
of 1919

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The
PEACE CONFERENCE
of 1919

ORGANIZATION AND PROCEDURE

By
F. S. MARSTON

*Issued under the auspices of the Royal Institute of
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PREFACE

My general interest in the processes of peace-making at the conclusion of our first great struggle with Germany had led me to begin the researches of which this book is the final outcome some time before the renewal of the conflict in 1939. The nature of my duties then compelled me to leave London and greatly delayed the completion of the work, while, owing to war conditions, I found it extremely difficult to obtain all the most recent publications bearing upon my theme, especially those coming from across the Atlantic.

In my choice of a subject I was influenced by the fact that, though the handling by the Paris Conference of the major problems that came before it had been exhaustively treated in many published volumes, the procedure of the Conference had so far received insufficient consideration. There was an obvious need for an objective analysis of the organization of the Conference; of what it was as distinct from what it did, so many mistaken judgments having been made in this connection. Though while the records of the Council of Four, and of the British Empire Delegation remain unpublished there can be no final judgment concerning the personalities, the achievements and the failures of the Conference, I have good reason for my belief that what has still to be made public is not likely to affect the conclusions I have reached in the sphere of organization and procedure.

It is through force of circumstances rather than by design that the final stages of my task are being completed at a time when problems of peace-making are once more claiming some degree of preparatory attention, but, this being the case, it is my hope that the book may be out in time to help to convince the general reader of the vital necessity of co-ordinated planning for the work that will have to be undertaken from the moment military victory has been achieved. The following pages will show the extent to which the throwing away of the fruits of victory twenty-five years ago was due to premature relaxation of effort and failure to make immediate use of the organization that had been so laboriously developed during the war years.

I owe a debt which cannot adequately be expressed here to

Professor C. K. Webster, without whose initial guidance and continuing inspiration this book would never have been written. My sincere thanks are also due to those of my former colleagues on the staff of the East Ham Grammar School who helped me in so many ways during the three years of our exile in Wiltshire and to Mr. D. J. R. Thomas, B.A., my colleague at Cambridge, who has helped to compile the Index.

F. S. MARSTON

GREAT SHELFORD, CAMBRIDGE

July 1944

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FOREWORD

by PROFESSOR C. K. WEBSTER

{THE Paris Peace Conference was a unique gathering of the nations.) We are still perhaps too near it and too deeply involved in its consequences to make a final appraisal of its work. Almost all that has been written about it is deeply coloured with interest or prejudice. German propaganda obscured many of the main issues and, now that we see what the object of that propaganda was, we are almost compelled to react too violently in opposition to it. There have been far too many hasty judgments on the great issues of the Conference and far too little calm analysis of its work.

Before we can judge with any degree of certainty what was done there, we must learn how it was done and why it was done in that way. This is the purpose of Dr. Marston's book, and no other of which I am aware has provided us with a survey of this kind of the procedure of the Conference. Not all the evidence is yet available, but I have myself seen most of the official documents that have not been at Dr. Marston's disposal, and I do not think that his conclusions will be materially affected by them when they are published. Fortunately a great mass of documentation already exists for the use of the scholar, and this body of evidence Dr. Marston has scrutinized and analysed with patient skill and understanding.

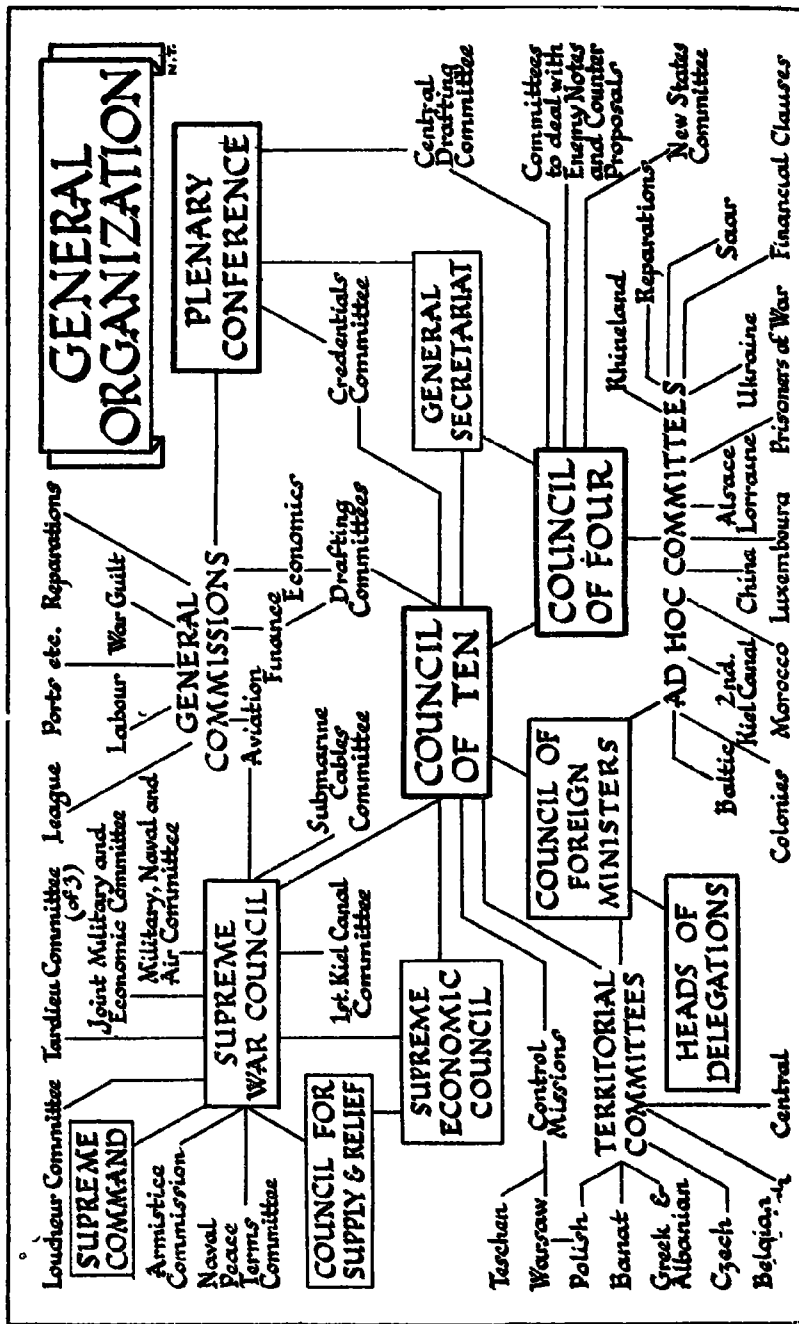
He has shown (what is true of all meetings of this kind) that the procedure of the Conference was conditioned by the machinery set up for the conduct of the war. The genius of Lord Hankey had brought into being a new technique for international conferences, and it was inevitably used for the greatest of them all. It was his energy and organizing ability that gave the Conference such unity as it possessed. Though it took place in the French capital and was dominated by the commanding personality of a great American President, it was the British Secretary-General who was the centre of the administrative machinery, and it is difficult to see how the three masterful men who had to make the final decisions could have come to agreement without his catalytic agency.

We can see now that much was done wrongly and that some of the greatest decisions were taken by methods which seem curiously irresponsible and inadequate. But it is necessary to remember that practically no serious and responsible attention had been given to the question of Conference procedure by those who were to control it until a very late date. Such preparations as had been made in Great Britain, France, and the United States had been mainly concerned with the issues themselves, not with the method by which they were to be solved. So far as procedure had been studied at all it had been studied by those who had little connection with the war machinery, and their plans did not, therefore, fit into the pattern of the forces that were to determine events at Paris. Few people had imagined how difficult and complex the process of peacemaking was to be. No one had foreseen that the Conference would be the centre of world power while the great figures were present at it, and that a great part of its time and energy would have to be spent on immediate problems rather than on the negotiation of the permanent peace terms. Thus at the outset the machinery was strangely amateurish and defective. It was only by desperately hard work and brilliant improvisation that some kind of order was produced out of the chaotic mass of delegates and experts who had to serve and advise their imperious masters, none of whom was anxious to confine himself in the strait-jacket of official machinery.

To what extent in so short a time the vast quantity of expert knowledge was brought to bear on the new and intricate problems of the permanent peace is clearly explained in Dr. Marston's analysis. If he had been less scrupulous in weighing the evidence and less aware of the responsibility of his task, he could no doubt have produced more clear-cut and more easily understood explanations of the complex play of forces. But such superficial estimates, which have disfigured much of the treatment of the subject during the last quarter of a century, obscure rather than reveal the truth.

It was one of my tasks to inform the peace-makers of the work of the Congress of Vienna—the only precedent that then existed for a Conference such as that which met at Paris. I cannot say that my monograph made any difference to the decisions that were taken at Paris or to the methods by which those decisions were produced. Statesmen can learn easily enough, but they

find it difficult to apply their knowledge to the problems that immediately confront them. "In general," wrote Palmerston in one of the pungent private letters that he sometimes penned, "it is the immediately pending future that determines the conduct of Governments and not the embalmed past." We have moved into a world even more bloody and harsh than that of 1918. Peace-making will be correspondingly more difficult and the treaties may, perhaps, have to be made by quite different methods. But Dr. Marston's revealing work may well serve to show that the methods by which we try to attain our ends are second in importance only to the ends themselves.



CHAPTER I

THE SUPREME WAR COUNCIL

[THE organization of the Paris Conference of 1919 did not arise as a new creation after the cessation of hostilities, but was based upon machinery and procedure already established. This war-time machinery, entirely empirical in origin, serving as it did the purposes of all the world's leading States except the eclipsed Central Powers and outlawed Soviet Russia, possessed many of the attributes of a world-government.] It is scarcely an exaggeration to say that, as things stood on the morning of 11th November 1918, hardly a ton of goods could be moved by land or sea without the sanction, direct or indirect, of those who controlled the elaborate organization established by the Allied and Associated Powers. The very centre of this organization was the Supreme War Council.

Inter-Allied conferences of various kinds had, of course, been held from time to time since the war began, but these did not begin to assume a definite shape until the early weeks of 1916. Suggestions had previously been made (e.g., by Lord Kitchener to the British War Committee in January 1915¹) that some kind of permanent machinery for the co-ordination of the war effort should be established; but it was at a meeting of the leading Allied statesmen, held in Paris in November 1915, that the first step in this direction was taken by a decision in favour of the principle, Mr. Asquith at the same time undertaking to produce a scheme. There followed informal exchanges of views between London and Paris, the basis for examination being a British plan for the establishment of an Inter-Allied Committee (or Council). The main features of the British plan were accepted, and a further conference between Mr. Asquith and M. Briand at Downing Street on 19th January 1916 gave definite sanction to a formal and permanent organization for co-operation among the Allies.

The chief features of the new scheme were as follows: (a) The composition of the Committee was to be elastic, for to the nucleus of Premiers were to be added, as necessity arose, such members of their Governments and staffs as might be required for the proper treatment of the particular business in hand. Moreover,

though the Premiers and other representatives present would normally be those of the leading Allies, the chief statesmen of any Allied State might be invited. (b) The Committee was to be purely advisory in character, and its conclusions were subject to the approval of the Governments concerned. (c) Though there was not to be a permanent secretariat, as the British had suggested, each Government was to nominate a Secretary-Liaison Officer, whose function was to act as Joint-Secretary at meetings of the Committee and to ensure permanent contact between the respective Governments.²

This formal organization was used for the first time when the Inter-Allied Committee met in Paris in March 1916, and, in addition to the Premiers of France, Great Britain and Italy, there were present representatives of Russia and Japan, the Premiers of Belgium and Serbia, and a Portuguese delegate. The handling of all important issues by such gatherings became more and more a regular practice during the remaining months of the year 1916. An important meeting to consider economic problems of the war and the period immediately after it was held in Paris in June, and an equally important gathering for the purposes of a general stocktaking took place, also in Paris, in November.

The year 1917 was, however, to produce the most important developments in connection with the machinery of Inter-Allied co-operation. At the end of the preceding year Mr. Lloyd George had become Premier in London, and, while reorganizing the machinery for the direction of the British war effort, he was at the same time a great believer in the extension of co-operation among the Allies. Thus the Inter-Allied gathering in Rome in January 1917 was more ambitious and comprehensive than any previous meeting. The choice of meeting-place emphasized a new desire to bring Italy into the main stream of Allied co-ordination, and naturally that country was well represented. Mr. Lloyd George was accompanied by Lord Milner, and M. Briand by M. Albert Thomas. Military experts were present in force, and Sir Francis Elliot, the British Minister in Athens, was also present.³ Another important conference of this year was that held at St. Jean de Maurienne in April to allay Italian suspicions aroused by Anglo-French moves towards a separate peace with Austria, and to consider a possible Italian share in the eventual partition of the Ottoman Empire. In all there were eleven Inter-Allied meetings from January to October 1917.

The year of the Rome and St. Jean de Maurienne meetings, bringing Italy into closer co-operation with France and Great Britain, saw also the defection of Russia and the entry of America into the conflict. Inevitably these two big events in the history of the war greatly affected the course of Inter-Allied co-operation. Her geographical position had tended to keep Russia apart from the western Allies, though minor Russian representatives sometimes attended Inter-Allied meetings, as in Paris in March 1916. There were, quite naturally, various projects for the maintenance of closer contact with Petrograd, one of these being the ill-fated Kitchener Mission of the spring of 1916. At the Paris meeting of November 1916 it was decided that a political and military conference should be held in Russia early in 1917, and, but for his becoming Premier, Mr. Lloyd George would have gone to represent Britain.⁴ An Allied Mission to Russia was in fact dispatched, and there were conferences in Petrograd in February 1917, seeming to foreshadow an extension of the existing Inter-Allied machinery. This was, however, on the very eve of the internal upheaval in Russia, which was to end any possibility of such an extension in that direction, and to confine the development of Inter-Allied co-ordination to the west. Of greater moment was the gradual inclusion of America within the framework of the co-ordinating machinery after her declaration of war in April 1917. The British Mission to the United States, composed of Mr. Balfour and Lords Reading and Northcliffe, was followed by the House Mission to Europe, which arrived on 7th November 1917 in time to be associated with the important conferences in Paris and Versailles in November and December. The full and regular participation of America in the counsels of the Allies was, however, not to come before the autumn of 1918.

The most obvious development of the year 1917 was the formal establishment of the Supreme War Council by the Inter-Allied Conference at Rapallo in November, this move arising directly from the military situation after Caporetto. While the elastic Inter-Allied Committee, as formally recognized in 1916, provided a satisfactory means of political co-operation, there was an increasing recognition that on the military side something was lacking. Staff conferences, attended by French, British, Italian and Belgian military chiefs, had been held at Calais and Chantilly in 1915 and 1916, sometimes, as in November 1916, simultaneously with a meeting of the political chiefs elsewhere; but these appeared

to have comparatively little value. After the Paris meeting of the Inter-Allied Committee in November 1916 Mr. Lloyd George expressed to Sir Maurice (now Lord) Hankey his general dissatisfaction concerning the conduct of the war and his feeling that meetings such as the one just ended were not sufficient to ensure adequate military co-operation.⁵

The idea of creating some form of Inter-Allied Staff had indeed been put forward at the military conferences of 1915 and 1916, but nothing had resulted from such suggestions. Another method of achieving co-ordination of effort on the Western Front was therefore tried in the early weeks of 1917, when the British Government instructed Sir Douglas Haig to conform to the plans of General Nivelle; but the disastrous failure of the French offensive temporarily discredited the conception of a unified command, and after the Nivelle failure the idea of an Inter-Allied Staff or War Council once more came to the fore. Later in 1917 there was an informal week-end gathering at Chequers, where Mr. Lloyd George, Mr. Balfour, General Smuts, M. Painlevé (then French Premier), M. Franklin-Bouillon and Marshal Foch were among the guests of Lord and Lady Lee, whose gift of this estate to the nation had just been accepted. The British Premier took advantage of this opportunity to bring forward a proposal, that he had previously been discussing with some of his colleagues, for the supplementing of the political machinery already developed by the creation of a permanent military body of an advisory character.⁶

This British initiative led to further Anglo-French consultations, the French Premier desiring an Inter-Allied Staff pure and simple with Marshal Foch presiding, Mr. Lloyd George, however, very largely for reasons of domestic politics, preferring to link up the military arrangements with the existing machinery for Inter-Allied political co-ordination. No definite steps could be taken at once, but Caporetto brought the issue rapidly to the fore and made the creation of some new body a matter of practical politics. At this juncture, on 30th October, Mr. Lloyd George wrote to M. Painlevé giving an outline of a plan prepared by Sir Henry Wilson in August. This was studied by the French military experts and a draft constitution was prepared, which was the basis of the scheme formally adopted at Rapallo.⁷

The Rapallo discussions lasted for two days, 6th and 7th November 1917, the place of meeting being the New Casino

Hotel, where there were sessions at 10.15, 2.45, and 7.0 on the first day, and at 11.0 and 5.30 on the second. The political chiefs present were Signor Orlando and Baron Sonnino, MM. Painlevé and Franklin-Bouillon, Mr. Lloyd George and General Smuts. M. Barrère, the French Ambassador in Rome, was also present, while Sir Maurice Hankey recorded the discussions and decisions in company with his Italian counterpart, Count Aldrovandi, and the military chiefs were called in for consultation as required.⁸ There issued from these discussions the constitution of the Supreme War Council.

This was essentially the Inter-Allied Committee of 1916 under another name, the new feature being the addition of Permanent Military Representatives to watch the military situation from day to day and act constantly in an advisory capacity to the Council. Thus there was to be more effective military co-operation in the west, the question of an extension of scope to cover other fronts (e.g., Salonika) being shelved. From the scheme for military co-operation by means of Permanent Military Representatives developed the idea of an Executive Committee in control of a General Reserve, theoretically established in January 1918, but never effectively functioning. The failure of this General Reserve to materialize, and the obvious disadvantages of control by Committee led in turn to the steps by which Marshal Foch became Generalissimo.

Undue concentration upon the military aspect has tended to obscure the fact that Rapallo gave only a new name and further formal definition to machinery for Inter-Allied consultation that had been developing long before. This had always been used in connection with matters of high policy, both political and military, and continued to be so used under its new name, though in some minds there was a confusion of thought by which the Supreme War Council was held to have a military purpose only. Thus President Wilson objected to the issue of a political declaration on behalf of the Allies concerning the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk as coming from the Supreme War Council.⁹ A more correct account of the functioning of Inter-Allied consultative machinery had been presented to the President before Rapallo in a 'Memorandum on Inter-Allied Co-operation' dated 10th October 1917. In this document there was a reference to the previous development of an Inter-Allied Council, and the Memorandum continued: 'This Council is composed of representatives of the Allied

Governments, including Naval and Military representatives. This Council has met before and will meet again whenever it is found necessary. The members of the Council have supreme authority from their Governments to discuss the political aims of their Allies and the various military objectives which may help to realize these aims.¹⁰ The same point was later emphasized by General Bliss, who wrote: 'It will be noted that, while chiefly concerned with watching over the "conduct of the war", the Supreme War Council was nevertheless a political body.'¹¹ The London session of the Supreme War Council in March 1918 was indeed very largely a diplomatic conference without the military. Rapallo had not fundamentally changed the situation.

President Wilson's objection to the issue of political declarations on behalf of the Allies by the Supreme War Council, whatever its theoretical basis, must in reality have been due to the fact that the United States had no permanent political representation on the Council until the weeks immediately preceding the Armistice of November. General Pershing had refused an invitation to attend at Rapallo 'as the purpose of a council seemed to be more for political co-ordination than for purely military control'¹² and Colonel House had advised against the appointment of a permanent political member who could not, from the nature of things, be the Chief Executive or Secretary of State as in the case of the European Allies.¹³ Mr. Frazier, Counsellor at the American Paris Embassy, was appointed as 'The Diplomatic Liaison Officer with the Supreme War Council', but after the return of the House Mission, following the Paris and Versailles meetings of November–December 1917, America was effectively represented only by General Bliss in a military capacity. 'At no time,' wrote the latter in his report, 'did the United States Government have a representative at any sessions of the Supreme War Council who could speak for that Government as the Prime Ministers of the Allied Governments could speak for theirs. The resolutions passed at the various sessions were, therefore, cabled to Washington . . . for acceptance or rejection by the President as the fourth member of the Supreme War Council.'¹⁴

Another and, perhaps, far more significant development of 1917 was the holding in association with the House Mission, and in conjunction with the next meeting of the Supreme War Council after Rapallo (November–December 1917), of a full Inter-Allied Conference at the Quai d'Orsay.¹⁵ Here the following States were

represented: United States, Great Britain, France, Italy, Japan, Belgium, Serbia, Montenegro, Greece, Roumania, Portugal, China, Brazil, Cuba, Liberia and Siam, and even Russia had her Paris Ambassador in attendance, though the defection of his country was all but complete. It is clear from various references in the House Papers that an extraordinary Inter-Allied gathering was contemplated as early as the end of September (i.e., before Rapallo) and was originally planned for October, but postponed. The invitation to attend was conveyed to Colonel House by Ambassador Jusserand on 19th October with the intimation that all the Allied and Associated States would be represented. It is certain, however, that there was no original intention to hold formal sessions of any kind, but merely to engage in general consultation as required. M. Clemenceau, as he told Colonel House on 28th November, held that it was 'useless to call all the experts and delegates . . . into a general meeting'. He very much objected to 'the spectacular manner in which it was called'. 'The Conference itself to-morrow,' cabled House to President Wilson on the same day, 'will not be important, for there will be representatives of all Allied Powers, and the discussions must necessarily be of a general and not very intimate character. Such a large conference was a mistake and has many elements of danger. Our main endeavour now is to get through it without any mishap.'¹⁶

It would appear that, as M. Paul Cambon explained to Colonel House in London on 13th November, pressure from the Lesser Allies and Associates was strong enough to secure the holding of formal sessions, thus establishing an important precedent. An even more significant feature, however, was the way in which M. Clemenceau, who presided, handled the delegates at these sessions, and demonstrated that his own apprehensions and those of some of his colleagues had been groundless. There was a brief opening session on 29th November, of which Colonel House recorded in his Diary: 'I feel sure there has never been a conference of such importance with so little said and which was so promptly closed.'¹⁷ All the real work was done in various sub-committees appointed to consider economic and other problems, these committees reporting to the second and closing formal session of the Conference on 3rd December. It was clear that the Great Powers of the Supreme War Council, which had been in session meanwhile, could successfully summon and manage a full and formal gathering of Allied representatives. This lesson was

to be remembered as the time of peace negotiations approached a year later.

~The eighth article of the Rapallo constitution provided that the Supreme War Council should meet normally at Versailles, where the Permanent Military Representatives and their staffs were to be established, though it might meet at other places when necessary. Actually of the sessions held during the war period, including the Rapallo Conference and the Armistice Sessions, six were at Versailles, the other meeting-places, in addition to Rapallo, being London and Abbeville. The French naturally wanted Paris to be the headquarters, and, though there was opposition to this at Rapallo, they gained the substance of their desire when Versailles was chosen by way of compromise,¹⁸ the necessary permanent staff being lodged in the new Hôtel Trianon.

This establishment of a permanent organization upon French soil was probably the most important new feature of the machinery for Inter-Allied co-operation resulting from the Rapallo decisions, for, though the Supreme War Council, like the Inter-Allied Committee before it, could not be said to have a permanent home, the convenience of meeting at or near Versailles became more and more recognized, and the practice developed, so that an important precedent for the eventual peace negotiations was being established. At all meetings upon French soil the chair was taken by the French Premier, who from December 1917 was M. Clemenceau.

If, however, the French, through the Supreme War Council, were establishing, perhaps unwittingly, a claim to the place and chairmanship of the eventual Peace Conference, the general organization and procedure of the Inter-Allied war-time consultations, that were so greatly to influence the procedure of 1919, were British. The underlying principles may be traced back to the Committee of Imperial Defence, which had been established by Mr. Balfour in 1904. This body was, like the Inter-Allied Committee and the Supreme War Council, not executive but purely consultative, and like them it was elastic in composition, since it was composed at any given time of the Prime Minister of the day and any one he chose to invite, the heads of the departments concerned with subjects on the agenda being in practice always present. After the outbreak of war the Committee of Imperial Defence gradually developed into the War Committee

of the Asquith Cabinet, which in its turn was followed by the Lloyd George War Cabinet and the Imperial War Cabinet.¹⁹ Neither of these bodies, as such, possessed executive power, which was exercised by the Prime Minister through the various heads of departments serving under him, and their composition was in reality very elastic, for even the meetings of the small War Cabinet of 1917-18 were often crowded with other ministers, etc., specially summoned to assist with the business in hand.

One might reasonably suppose that, in putting forward suggestions for the development of Inter-Allied consultation in war-time, the British Government could hardly fail to be influenced by the machinery for inter-departmental co-ordination that had been gradually built up at home. Lord Hankey, however, goes further and states that the British scheme for an Inter-Allied Committee put forward and in the main accepted, in January 1916, 'was deliberately an adaptation of the machinery of the Committee of Imperial Defence.'²⁰ He also points out how closely the British proposals which became the basis of the Rapallo agreement followed the same precedent.²¹

The most important British contribution in the sphere of procedure was, however, in connection with the secretariat, and the link here was Hankey himself, who was first appointed as Secretary to the Committee of Imperial Defence, became afterwards Secretary to the British War Cabinet,²² and then Chief Secretary to the Supreme War Council. As Secretary to the Committee of Imperial Defence he had developed the practice, new to governmental spheres, of recording not merely decisions arrived at, but also, in the form of a *précis*, the general trend of the discussions preceding the decisions. This added to the value of the record while avoiding verbatim reproduction. 'A really good and discreet *précis*,' he has contended, 'is preferable to stenographic notes; . . . this tends to greater freedom of discussion.'²³ This practice he brought to the Cabinet itself and took with him to Inter-Allied gatherings.

Full summaries of the discussions at such conferences as those at Rome and St. Jean de Maurienne were thus recorded, and the same procedure was followed in the days of the Supreme War Council. The British Minutes of these war-time discussions are labelled 'I.C.', thus beginning the series which was to cover the meetings of the Council of Ten during the Peace Conference itself.²⁴ There was also a permanent Joint-Secretariat attached

to the Military Representatives at Versailles, and the British section under Lt.-Colonel Lancelot Storr was a branch of the War Cabinet Secretariat at home, thus following its methods and perpetuating them. The British, American, French, and Italian Secretaries at Versailles used to meet after every meeting and dictate in turn the notes they had made, thus ensuring complete co-ordination and at the same time, unwittingly, the general acceptance of British procedure.²⁵

An Anglo-American contribution to the procedure of the eventual Peace Conference through the medium of the war-time consultations was the English language. Since Anglo-French co-operation was from the beginning the basis of all Allied consultative organization there was a natural tendency throughout for English to be placed on an equality with French, and this was accentuated after the entry of America into the war. Indeed, during the Armistice Session of November 1918, when the leading statesmen formed a small, inner, steering committee, English tended to become the sole language of discussion, since Mr. Lloyd George, Mr. Balfour, Colonel House, M. Clemenceau and Baron Sonnino could all understand it, Signor Orlando and M. Pichon being the exceptions.²⁶

By the autumn of 1918, therefore, there had developed practices of consultation that were greatly to influence the form of the peace negotiations, and in the background was an elaborate organization of executive control. 'It is not too much to say,' writes Lord Hankey, 'that this organization covered every sphere of Inter-Allied activity and constituted a veritable organ of international government.'²⁷ Since the Supreme War Council was not in permanent session it could not itself exercise continuity of supervision, and thus the effective control of the economic machinery was exercised by the Allied Maritime Transport Council, for, in the circumstances of 1917 and 1918, transport was the controlling factor.

This body, which came into being after the Inter-Allied meetings of November–December 1917, during which the whole question of shipping and cargoes had been investigated by a Maritime Transport and General Imports Sub-Committee,²⁸ held its first meeting in March 1918, and thereafter met three times before the Armistice, London being the meeting-place. It was composed of two representatives from each of the Four Great Powers, Britain being represented by the Under-Secretary for Foreign

Affairs, Lord Robert Cecil (who was, in fact, in charge of economic warfare), and the Shipping Controller; France by the Ministers for Commerce and Munitions; the United States by a former Vice-Chairman of the Shipping Board and a technical expert; and Italy by the Food Controller and Transport Minister. It was not, however, through the Council itself that day-to-day control was exercised, but rather by the Allied Maritime Transport Executive, established also in London at Lancaster House. This body controlled directly a Tonnage Committee, a Ship-Purchasing Committee, and an Imports Committee. Working in close connection with the Maritime Transport Council was the Allied Blockade Council.²⁹

At the other end of the scale, engaged upon the more immediate control of production and purchase, were various Programme Committees and Executives.³⁰ Some of these were concerned with miscellaneous items such as leather and hides, wool, cotton, jute, flax and hemp, timber, paper, coal and coke, tobacco and petroleum. Others were operating under the direction of the Allied Food Council—Wheat Executive, Oil-Seeds Executive, Meat and Fats Executive, and the Sugar Programme Committee. Others again, under the direction of the Allied Munitions Council, dealt with nitrates, aircraft, chemical explosives, non-ferrous metals, steel, and mechanical transport. Since the United States was the main source of supply, a vitally important body was the Allied Council on War Purchases, which co-ordinated purchases there.

The Naval Council, which was later to be responsible for the naval clauses of the Armistice, and afterwards, as the Naval Peace Terms Committee, for the substance of the naval clauses of the Versailles Treaty, was another important creation of this period. The Rome Conference of January 1917 had decided to arrange an Inter-Allied Naval Conference, and this was duly held in London in September 1917, but no permanent organization resulted, and at Rapallo the question of establishing a separate Naval Council was reserved. Colonel House and Admiral Benson, however, pressed afterwards for the creation of such a body, and their efforts were successful. The members of the Council were the Ministers of Marine and the Chiefs of Naval Staffs from Great Britain, France and Italy, together with flag officers representing the United States and Japan. It met sometimes in London and sometimes in Paris.³¹ A Naval Liaison Committee acted as a link

between the Permanent Military Representatives at Versailles and the Naval Council itself.³²

Another product of the war-years which was to continue and to be of some importance in the days of the Peace Conference was the Inter-Allied Aviation Committee. The formation of such a body was suggested by the Permanent Military Representatives in January 1918 and the proposal was adopted by the Supreme War Council on 1st February.³³

The position with regard to Inter-Allied organization during the closing stages of the war may be summarized as follows. An Inter-Allied Committee or Council had grown up, at first quite informally, and then with some formality, though with much greater elasticity. Its connection with the attempts to co-ordinate military operations on the Western Front led, after Rapallo, when the Permanent Military Representatives were present, to its taking the form of a Supreme War Council; but the essential nucleus was the more informal Inter-Allied Committee, which after the suspension of hostilities was to be known as the Supreme Council and to take various forms. A recognized procedure of British origin had become associated with these Inter-Allied consultations, and there was a tendency to hold them more and more frequently at Versailles. By December 1917 the defection of Russia had settled that the Council was to be one of the Western Powers only, and at the same time the coming of Clemenceau and Orlando to power had stabilized its personnel. American association on the political side was as yet not permanent, but the House Mission of 1917 had established a precedent. The Inter-Allied consultative machinery of 1918 may be compared in some measure with that established by the efforts of Castlereagh in the early weeks of 1814 at Langres, but the Council of 1918 on the eve of the Armistice wielded economic power that was unique.

CHAPTER II

THE ARMISTICES

THERE were many precedents for the suspension of hostilities as a preliminary to the opening of peace negotiations, a comparatively recent and noteworthy example being the Armistice signed by Jules Favre and Bismarck at Versailles on 28th January 1871, yet the practice had been by no means invariable. The Congress of Utrecht, for example, had assembled in January 1712, though an official truce was not arranged until June. The Châtillon Conference of February–March 1814 sat while fighting was still in progress, and in 1856 preliminaries of peace preceded a formal armistice in the Crimea by two months, though an informal truce came to be observed earlier.¹ The main background to the peace negotiations of 1919 was foreshadowed by the German Note of 4th October asking President Wilson to take the necessary steps to secure a suspension of hostilities as a preliminary to the negotiation of terms of peace on the basis of the Wilsonian declaration of 8th January 1918 and subsequent speeches. The political and military aspects of the German and other Armistices, except the Bulgarian, which was arranged on the spot, were obviously matters to be considered by the Supreme War Council.

The sessions of that Council at this juncture constitute an important link between the procedure of war-time consultations and that of the Peace Conference. American participation now becomes continuous, Colonel House acting as the forerunner of President Wilson; the development of an inner 'steering committee', foreshadowed by many previous instances during the war-years, is now a matter of importance; the method of associating the Lesser Allies in some measure with the conduct of negotiations has now to be seriously considered; throughout the discussions the statesmen are concerned not merely with the military issue, but with the essential political bases of the future peace settlement. Moreover, because of the issues at stake, we have fuller accounts of these than of any other meetings.

There were, if we include the gatherings of early October, which are apparently not to be regarded as formal meetings,² two 'Armistice sessions' of the Supreme War Council, both at

Versailles. The first of these, 5th–9th October, considered future military operations against the Ottoman and Habsburg Empires in the light of the Bulgarian collapse, approved armistice terms to be offered to Turkey, if requested, and decided the attitude to be adopted towards the German and Austro-Hungarian approach to President Wilson. The second of these sessions, 31st October–4th November, approved armistice terms to be presented to the representatives of the Dual Monarchy and Germany, came to an agreement upon the political issues raised by the German Note to Washington and considered plans for the further prosecution of the war in the event of a refusal by the enemy to accept the proffered terms.

America had no political representative at the first of these sessions and, in view of the vital part obviously to be played by the United States and its President in this crisis, this lack was found to be a considerable handicap. An Allied message to President Wilson, in reply to his formal notification of the German approach and of the American reply, included the following passage: 'The Allied Governments venture to point out to the President that the time has come when decisions of supreme importance in regard to the war may have to be taken at very short notice. They therefore think it would be of very great assistance if an American representative possessing the full confidence of the United States Government could be sent to Europe to confer, when occasion arose, with the other associated Governments so as to keep them accurately and fully informed of the point of view of the United States Government.'³ On 14th October Colonel House received a letter of credence from the President authorizing him to take part as his personal representative 'in the conferences of the Supreme War Council and in any other conferences in which it may be serviceable for him to represent me',⁴ and he left for France on 17th October to arrive in Paris on the 26th.

The very definite emergence of an inner steering committee is perhaps the most important feature of the Armistice period, though it was not entirely a new development. Inter-Allied consultation had begun informally during the early stages of the war, but there was always a tendency to give formal shape to the process. Counteracting this was the element of elasticity which always permitted the reintroduction of informality in new fashion. Thus the Rome Conference of January 1917 was at first

too unwieldy for business, but, as Lord Hankey tells us, the leading statesmen met the situation by adjourning to an inner room for private discussion.⁵ Such inner consultations became even more necessary in the days of the Supreme War Council in view of the presence of the military at all formal sessions.

The inner and informal body, after Rapallo, assumed one of two forms. The older Inter-Allied Committee without the military was occasionally revived as a Conference of Ministers which was sometimes a Council of Premiers and Foreign Secretaries. Thus on 29th November 1917 there was an important political conference in M. Pichon's room attended by the Premiers and Foreign Secretaries, together with Colonel House, to discuss the possibility of a separate peace with Austria.⁶ Again during the London session of the Supreme War Council in March 1918 there was held on 15th and 16th an Inter-Allied Diplomatic Conference.⁷ More frequently the inner group was composed of Premiers only. The Haig Diary records the attendance of the British Commander-in-Chief at the session of the Supreme War Council held at Versailles in January 1918 and adds: 'M. Clemenceau had a private meeting as usual with Lloyd George half an hour before, in order to settle privately the decisions at which it was intended to arrive in full conference.'⁸ Here we can plainly discern the embryonic form of a steering committee.

It was, however, during the Armistice meetings of the Supreme War Council that the existence of an inner cabinet became a definite feature of the organization, and by meeting normally in Paris while the formal gatherings of the Supreme War Council were held at Versailles this cabinet emphasized its separate nature. The core of this inner body was the very informal Committee of Premiers, but this was occasionally expanded into a slightly more formal Conference of Ministers. On this body each of the Member States was represented by another minister in addition to its Premier, as had been the usual practice in purely political meetings before and after Rapallo.

At this stage, however, the Conference of Ministers tends to become more definitely a Council of Premiers and Foreign Secretaries. The regular association of the Foreign Secretaries with the proceedings was a sign of transition from problems of war to problems preliminary to peace, and foreshadowed the Council of Ten. The Council of Premiers may be regarded as the forerunner of the Council of Four. During the November

session Colonel House was a member of the inner group in both its forms, being in a special position as the personal representative of President Wilson.

Of the informal meetings held at the beginning of October our information is limited. There were meetings of the Premiers and Foreign Secretaries in Paris on 5th, 6th, and 7th October to consider the leading principles upon which any armistice must be based,⁹ and the note of reference to the Military Representatives begins: 'The Conference of Ministers at a meeting held on 7th October 1918, etc., etc.'¹⁰ On the afternoon of 9th October the Premiers met to receive a report from Marshal Foch in person, and the draft telegram to Washington commenting upon the American reply to the first German Note seems to have been approved by them that same afternoon.¹¹

Owing to the vital and controversial nature of the topics discussed thereat we have already a fairly full and accurate knowledge of all the gatherings, formal and informal, associated with the second Armistice session of the Supreme War Council. A number of meetings and conversations more or less informal were held between the arrival of Colonel House on 26th October and the formal opening of the session at Versailles on the afternoon of the 31st, these consultations beginning with some very informal interchanges between the French and British Premiers and Colonel House at the latter's headquarters on Sunday the 27th, Signor Orlando not yet having arrived.

The continuous series of conversations began on Tuesday the 29th with a meeting of the Premiers and Foreign Secretaries in M. Pichon's room at the Quai d'Orsay, where the statesmen sat 'in a semicircle around the great flat-topped desk in front of the fireplace'.¹² On the 30th there was a morning meeting of the Premiers and Colonel House in M. Clemenceau's room at the Ministry of War, and in the afternoon a full meeting of Premiers and Foreign Secretaries at the Quai d'Orsay, when Signor Orlando was present for the first time.

From 31st October to 4th November, except on Sunday 3rd November, there were formal meetings at Versailles each afternoon. It was during this period that the Premiers and Colonel House most definitely functioned as a steering committee, meeting daily in the mornings in Paris before going out to Versailles for the afternoon meetings. There being no Versailles meeting on the Sunday, the Premiers then met in the afternoon. For these

meetings the Premiers used either the residence of Colonel House or M. Clemenceau's room at the Ministry of War.

Unlike the later Council of Four, they met for the purpose of guiding the deliberations of a larger and more formal body. 'The three Prime Ministers, Marshal Foch and myself met this morning,' cabled House to Washington on 31st October, 'and practically agreed upon terms for the armistice with Austria in order that we might facilitate matters when we met at Versailles this afternoon.'¹³ It was agreed among the Premiers at the outset that no matter should be raised at Versailles in formal session until a decision on the main principles involved had been arrived at by the steering committee, and this procedure was adhered to except in the case of the proposed naval terms which, being brought up before the Supreme War Council while the Premiers had not yet arrived at an understanding on the subject, had to be referred back again. Decisions arrived at during the mornings in Paris were usually submitted for ratification in the afternoons at Versailles. This latter process was, however, somewhat of a formality and was in some instances dispensed with. When Lord Milner, who replaced Mr. Lloyd George at the last Versailles meeting, referred to the fact that certain decisions of the inner group had not been formally ratified, M. Clemenceau observed bluntly: 'The Supreme War Council met this morning and passed upon those questions. Whenever the Prime Ministers and Col. House meet the Supreme War Council meets, and what we do is final.'¹⁴

The Versailles meetings were held in a large room at the Hôtel Trianon, where the numerous delegates and military and naval representatives conversed across a wide table that extended down the length of the room. M. Clemenceau sat at the middle on one side with Colonel House directly opposite. Pomp and ceremony were lacking, and there was a business-like atmosphere. M. Terrail has given the following description: 'Les civils descendaient de leur automobile en veston sous leur pardessus, et en chapeau rond, quelquefois en chapeau mou: les militaires en tenue de campagne. Et dans la salle du Conseil le ton d'un débat d'affaires. Un auditeur aurait cru assister à la séance du conseil d'administration d'une compagnie privée.'¹⁵

The work of these Inter-Allied Conferences at Paris and Versailles may be summarized under these heads: (i) drafting military and naval armistice terms; (ii) agreement upon the

political basis for the making of the peace settlement; (iii) discussion of plans for the further prosecution of the war in the event of an enemy refusal to accept the terms offered. All these different problems had constantly to be borne in mind, and it is broadly true to say that they were treated simultaneously. There was no plan of any kind for division of labour, either between the different informal gatherings (i.e., between Premiers and the Council of Premiers and Foreign Secretaries) or between them and the formal Supreme War Council.

The extent to which Japan and the Lesser European Allies should be associated with these discussions, and the manner of their association, were important issues which arose when the second Armistice session of the Supreme War Council was about to begin, and were discussed by the Premiers and Foreign Secretaries in M. Pichon's room on 29th October. There were two distinct types of war-time precedent for such association. On the one hand there was the precedent established by the holding of a formal Inter-Allied Conference in 1917. Such a gathering could not be summoned amid the rush of events in the autumn of 1918, even had there been any inclination on the part of the leading statesmen of the Great Powers to follow such a procedure at this juncture. There was, on the other hand, the informal precedent that had been established by the calling in of representatives of the Lesser Allies for special consultations when necessary. Thus M. Venizelos, who was very active behind the scenes during the closing stages of the conflict, was present at the meeting of the Supreme War Council at Versailles on 1st December 1917 to report on the situation in Greece.¹⁶

Belgium and Japan appear to have taken the lead in asking to be allowed to send delegates to participate in the Armistice discussions. A Belgian request for representation was apparently made at the close of the consultations of early October and considered by the Premiers, etc., on the afternoon of the 9th, it being then provisionally decided not to add a Belgian delegate to the Supreme War Council, but to permit one to attend when Belgian questions were being discussed.¹⁷ Japan having also asked to be allowed to participate, the general question was discussed at length on 29th October.¹⁸

M. Pichon suggested that Belgium had a right to be consulted; but it was pointed out that all the arguments in favour of the participation of Belgium would seem to apply equally to Serbia

and Greece. Various suggestions were then put forward as means of deciding as to which States should be allowed to send delegates. M. Pichon favoured the extension of the right of participation to all invaded countries, but, as Mr. Balfour pointed out, such a test would allow the inclusion of Montenegro while excluding Great Britain were she not already among the members of the Supreme War Council.

Mr. Lloyd George wanted to invite all those States which had made heavy sacrifices for the Allied cause and though it was obvious that such a test might be difficult to apply in practice, it was the basis of the solution adopted. This was that Japan and Belgium having asked for representation should be allowed to send delegates and that other States which had suffered severely or had made great sacrifices (such as Serbia and Greece) should also be allowed to do so on request.

Mr. Lloyd George's original suggestion was that delegates from these States need not be present for the whole of the discussions, but that they should be represented when questions which affected them were being discussed. This formula was later to be applied, at least in theory, to the Peace Conference itself. Actually the participation of the delegates from the minor States at Versailles does not seem to have been governed by any such formula, for most of them were present throughout the formal sessions. The States availing themselves of the opportunity to send delegates were Japan, Belgium, Serbia, Greece and Portugal. Belgium was specially favoured in that her delegate, M. Hymans, was called into conference with the Premiers and Colonel House on the afternoon of Sunday, 3rd November. Strangely enough, M. Matsui, the Japanese representative, afterwards denied before the Council of Ten that he had been present at any meeting at which the Fourteen Points had been discussed.¹⁹

The procedure followed in the drafting of the military and naval terms of the various Armistice agreements, and the manner of their conclusion, is of some interest, and throws light upon the working of the Inter-Allied organization at this period. The rapid Bulgarian collapse took the Allied statesmen by surprise, and the Supreme War Council was not in session at the time. M. Clemenceau took the initiative on 27th September²⁰ by asking the G.O.C. on the Balkan Front, Franchet d'Espérey, to forward his views on the military position; but this move came too late

to produce any central control of the situation, and on 29th September the Bulgarians accepted terms drafted by d'Espérey on his own responsibility. Thus the details of the first of the four Armistices were arranged on the spot.

When news of the Turkish moves preparatory to a request for an armistice leaked out, however, the October consultations between the Allied Premiers were in progress, and the matter was therefore threshed out at Versailles and Paris. It was agreed, apparently without question, that the Turkish request should be granted on suitable terms, and a draft of such terms, which had been approved by the British War Cabinet, was laid before the Premiers by Mr. Lloyd George. This was then referred to the military experts for emendation, subsequently becoming, with slight modifications, the official draft.²¹ After the Premiers had dispersed to their respective countries, following the ending of their conversations on 9th October, there was a violent dispute between London and Paris as to which Allied commander in the Mediterranean was to receive the Turkish envoys, but the Turks themselves proceeded by sending General Townshend, who had been their prisoner since the surrender of Kut, to Admiral Calthorpe at Mudros, where he arrived on 20th October. The Admiral cabled to London for instructions and was told to inform the Turks that he was empowered to deal with the negotiation and the signing of an armistice.²² There was a further acrimonious Anglo-French wrangle on the subject at the meeting of the Premiers and Foreign Secretaries on the afternoon of 30th October, but, as Mr. Lloyd George pointed out, their discussion could hardly affect the situation, for the Armistice with Turkey was being arranged even while they were speaking. The Mudros agreement was actually signed on 30th October.

On the afternoon of 30th October Signor Orlando reported in Paris that an Austrian approach had been made to General Diaz, who had refused to treat except with a properly accredited envoy after receiving instructions from Rome.²³ Mr. Lloyd George and M. Clemenceau were, however, very anxious that no unnecessary rebuff should be administered to the Austrians, whom they wished to clear from their path so that they might go forward against Germany. The armistice terms for Austria were drafted by experts in Paris, the naval section being examined by the Allied Naval Council. The terms in general were approved with modifications by the Premiers and Colonel House on the morning of

31st October. That afternoon they were formally approved by the Supreme War Council.

It was agreed that General Diaz should act on behalf of the Allied and Associated Governments in receiving accredited representatives of the Austrian High Command and in communicating to them the terms approved. The Italian Government was to act on behalf of the Supreme War Council in transmitting the terms and this decision to Diaz.²⁴ The position with regard to Austria was further considered by the Premiers and Colonel House on the morning of 2nd November, and after consultation with the military authorities it was decided to give Austria until midnight on the following day to accept the terms.²⁵ The statesmen assembled in Paris were closely watching the Austrian situation in order to obtain some idea of the probable German reaction to stiff military terms. The Armistice with Austria was actually signed on Sunday, 3rd November, at Villa Giusti.

The preparation of the terms of the Armistice with Germany being inevitably a much more important matter, the procedure adopted is therefore of greater interest, and concerning that procedure two points must be noted. In the first place, the important issue as to whether there should be any terms for the German armies and fleet, short of unconditional surrender, does not appear to have been at any time definitely before either the Supreme War Council or its steering committee. At the start of the negotiations the political chiefs seem to have regarded the question as one entirely military and therefore one to be dealt with in the main by the military chiefs themselves, the only serious attempt from the political side to prevent the arrangement of a truce and to ensure the unconditional surrender of the Germans being made by M. Poincaré, President of the French Republic. M. Clemenceau checked this move by sheltering himself behind his military advisers and threatening resignation.²⁶ Among the military, General Pershing was in favour of refusing to grant any terms to the Germans, but he did not express this opinion when the military leaders were called into conference by Marshal Foch, taking the not unreasonable view that the issue as to whether there should be an armistice of any kind was one to be settled first by the political leaders. He afterwards did put his own ideas on the subject in the form of a letter which he handed to Colonel House on 30th October for presentation to the Supreme War Council, while at the same time he cabled the substance to

Washington. But this move came too late. Colonel House, in conversation with the General's aide-de-camp, mentioned that he had shown the letter to Mr. Lloyd George and M. Clemenceau, but that the question was purely political and that all the Prime Ministers were in favour of an armistice.²⁷ If Colonel House was correctly interpreting the attitude of the Premiers, they had obviously shifted their ground.

The second noteworthy feature of the preparation of the German terms was the fact that there was never any definite decision by the Supreme War Council or its inner committee as to the procedure to be followed. One very obvious method was to use the machinery already in existence and submit the military issue to the Permanent Military Representatives. This was indeed the first mode of approach. On 5th and 6th October the French, British, and Italian Premiers, acting as an inner committee, discussed the necessary bases of any suspension of hostilities and decided upon certain leading principles, which involved the withdrawal of German forces behind the Rhine without any occupation of German territory by Allied troops, and the cessation of the submarine blockade without the lifting of the blockade of Germany. On 7th October the question was referred to the Permanent Military Representatives, who were to meet and discuss it in the light of the guidance given. They did meet, as instructed, on 8th October, and drew up a joint opinion, which they submitted to the Premiers. This expressed the view that disarmament of the enemy was essential and that guarantees should be sought by a demand for the handing over of certain fortresses. Bliss was unable to be present at the meeting of the 8th owing to indisposition, and, when afterwards asked to adhere to the joint opinion, refused to do so. This refusal was based upon a procedural rather than a military objection, for his attitude seems to have been that, since the leading principles had been drawn up without American participation, he could not act without instructions from Washington.²⁸ The difficulties bound to arise in a crisis while the United States of America had no political representative of eminence in Paris are here illustrated. The refusal of General Bliss to co-operate does, however, rather weaken the force of his criticism that hereafter the normal machinery of the Supreme War Council was not permitted to function.

That there is substance in this criticism is nevertheless true.

There was no military team-work after this opening. Ministers 'called from time to time for such assistance and advice as they desired', and the final terms were 'in no sense the result of the efforts of any duly appointed body'.²⁹ The change of procedure may have been due largely to French initiative and the intervention of Marshal Foch, who without invitation put forward his own proposals on 8th October and expounded them to the Premiers on the following day.³⁰ He urged the advance of the Allied armies to the Rhine and the holding of vital bridge-heads across the river. The statesmen departed after the conclusion of the October session of the Supreme War Council without coming to any decision on the subject, but the permitted intervention of the Generalissimo and the serious attention given to his views may be said to have established a precedent. On the eve of the resumption of the Inter-Allied consultations in Paris and Versailles, after President Wilson had officially passed on the German request for a truce to his European associates, M. Clemenceau, with or without the approval of the Allied Governments,³¹ requested Foch to prepare, in readiness for the coming discussions, a complete draft of terms based upon his earlier suggestions of 8th October.

At this stage there was a rather formal consultation of the Commanders-in-Chief of the three Allied armies at Senlis on 25th October, Generals Pétain, Haig and Pershing attending. This meeting was arranged very hurriedly, for the Belgian Chief-of-Staff was unable to arrive in time.³² Marshal Foch expressed to his military colleagues his own views in general, but did not present any draft, afterwards inviting them to state their opinions. No attempt was made to draw up a considered joint opinion of the Commanders-in-Chief for presentation to the Supreme War Council. On the day following the Senlis Conference Foch sent in to M. Clemenceau a draft that was entirely his own, and this became the basis for the military side of the November discussions. The final military terms as approved by the Council and presented to the Germans were substantially the same as this Foch draft.

The procedure followed in the preparation of the naval terms was rather different, for in this sphere there was some form of collective work. Naval experts were indeed associated with the military in the meeting of 8th October and the joint opinion which it produced, but the naval side of the Armistice was, in the main, the concern of the Allied Naval Council, composed of

admirals representing the navies of the Great Powers, which met in Paris or at Versailles while the Supreme War Council was in session. Foch did invite Admiral de Bon to Senlis, and naval terms were included in the draft which the Marshal presented, but his intrusion into this sphere was not successful. The draft which formed the basis of the naval discussions was drawn up by the Board of Admiralty in London on 16th October and approved by the British Cabinet after a very lengthy meeting on 21st October. It came before the Naval Council when it met more or less informally in Paris during the morning and afternoon of Monday, 28th October.³³

The crux of the whole discussion was the demand of the Admiralty for the surrender of a specified number of German surface ships, and no agreement was reached that day. On the afternoon of the following day, 29th October, a more formal meeting of the Council was held, and the British draft was eventually endorsed with but slight modifications. The steering committee of the Supreme War Council had, however, already come to the conclusion that the demand for the surrender of German ships must be modified, and at a meeting of Premiers on the morning of 1st November Mr. Lloyd George put forward the compromise suggestion that, while battle-cruisers should be surrendered, battleships might be interned. The Allied Naval Council, however, meeting at Versailles that afternoon, refused to revise the draft already approved. The issue was then taken out of the hands of the Admirals, and the eventual compromise, by which the battle-cruisers as well as the battleships were to be interned, was arrived at by the Premiers on the afternoon of 3rd November and on the following morning.

The political background of the Armistice negotiations is of some importance as providing the only approach to agreement concerning the basis for the later Peace Conference. The Bulgarian and Turkish Armistices had no political background, for the former was arranged without any diplomatic preliminaries, and, though the Turks did approach President Wilson, no answer was returned to them. With Austria the situation was slightly different, for Vienna engaged in diplomatic exchanges with Washington. Before these could be completed, however, the military situation compelled the immediate approach to General Diaz already referred to. In the case of Germany only were the diplomatic approaches to the Armistice completed.

During the early stages of the exchange of Notes between Germany and America the Allies as a whole were not officially concerned. The text of the first Note sent from the State Department in reply to the German request for an armistice was, however, formally communicated to the statesmen then assembled in Paris, and it was considered by the Premiers on 9th October.³⁴ It did not necessarily invite any reply from the Allies at this stage, but Mr. Lloyd George held that complete silence would seem to indicate complete assent, and he brought forward a draft of comment to be sent to Washington. This, substantially the same as the communication actually sent, raised no objection to the idea of an armistice, or to the suggestion in the background that it should be a preliminary to peace negotiations on the basis of the Wilsonian programme.³⁵ This political issue was not forced at the time because the military situation seemed to be of paramount importance.

✓ On 23rd October President Wilson officially placed the German request for an armistice before the Allies, and they had to take note of the important fact that the Berlin Government had expressly stated that the suspension of the fighting was to be followed by negotiations leading to a peace in harmony with the Fourteen Points, etc. It was indeed argued by M. Pichon at a meeting of the Council of Premiers and Foreign Secretaries that the political aspect could be ignored: 'We can say to Germany that we are only stating the terms of an armistice, not terms of peace.'³⁶ The British representatives suggested, however, that it was impossible to separate the different portions of the correspondence that had passed between the United States and Germany. Silence would appear to mean consent. This view prevailed, and the Wilsonian Points then became the main theme of the discussions of the inner group at Paris during the closing days of October and the early days of November.

The European Premiers naturally desired some more precise definition of the American programme, and this was provided by the Cobb-Lippmann Document placed by Colonel House before the steering committee. 'These interpretations,' wrote House afterwards, 'were on the table day after day.'³⁷ They were, unfortunately, never communicated to the Germans, who, nevertheless, had only themselves to blame for refraining of set purpose from requesting a definition. The Document was sent by Colonel House to President Wilson on 29th October, and the

President replied on 30th, approving it as 'a satisfactory interpretation of the principles involved'.³⁸ The fact that Wilson and House allowed the Germans to remain in ignorance of the existence of this explanatory statement suggests that they regarded the diplomatic issue as being primarily one between the United States and the other Allies.

The Allies were not disposed to accept the Wilsonian programme as it stood, and Mr. Lloyd George produced a British draft of a Memorandum of Reservation at a meeting of the Premiers and Colonel House (without Signor Orlando) on the morning of 30th October.³⁹ At the full meeting of Premiers and Foreign Secretaries on the afternoon of the same day there was an agreement to take this British draft as a basis for discussion.⁴⁰ In a slightly revised form this was read by Clemenceau to the formal meeting at Versailles on the afternoon of 1st November,⁴¹ but not finally adopted on this occasion. There were further discussions by the Premiers and Colonel House on the afternoon of Sunday, 3rd November, M. Hymans being called in, and on the morning of 4th November when the Memorandum of Reservation was approved in its final form. This wording was formally sanctioned by the closing meeting of the Supreme War Council session that afternoon.⁴² At 4 p.m. Colonel House cabled the text of the Memorandum to the State Department at Washington, and it was incorporated in the final Lansing Note to Germany dated 5th November.⁴³

The procedure followed in the final exchanges with the Germans is of some importance. There had indeed been some discussion as to the manner of presenting the terms for an armistice as early as 29th October at the meeting of Premiers and Foreign Secretaries.⁴⁴ On that occasion M. Clemenceau favoured the transmission of the military terms as well as the political basis via President Wilson, but the suggestion was opposed by Mr. Lloyd George, who contended that terms thus forwarded would be more or less publicly stated, and that there would be no possibility of give and take. M. Clemenceau objected to any procedure which might involve Marshal Foch in issuing an invitation to the Germans, and so it was agreed that President Wilson should simply inform the Germans of the necessity of approaching the Generalissimo if they wished to receive the military terms. These were not to be made public before acceptance.

In his cable of 4th November Colonel House not only forwarded

the text of the Memorandum, but repeated the details of the agreed procedure to be followed in the negotiations with the Germans. 'In order that there may be no misunderstanding,' ran the cable, 'I venture to repeat the procedure agreed upon for the handling of the armistice negotiations with Germany. . . . The President is expected to proceed as follows. . . .' Wilson was to forward to the Germans 'the memorandum of observations by the Allied Governments on the correspondence which has passed between the President and the German Government',⁴⁵ and at the same time he was to intimate the willingness of the Allied and Associated Governments to agree to a suspension of hostilities on suitable terms, but he was not himself to present those terms. Instead the Germans were, if after the receipt of the American Note they still desired a truce, to send envoys to meet Marshal Foch and Admiral Wemyss, who would be empowered to deal with them.

This duality of procedure tended to dissociate the political basis of the Armistice from the military and naval terms and has thus aroused much controversy as to the exact nature of the agreement entered into on 11th November. At Rethondes in the early hours of that day Herr Erzberger and his colleagues, together with Foch and Wemyss, signed an agreement of a purely military nature, and no political basis entered into the discussion. No political agreement between the Allies and Germany was signed at any stage of the proceedings. The Lansing Note, which embodied the political basis, was in form simply a unilateral declaration made by the State Department at Washington with the approval of the Allies as a whole. Yet, since this unilateral declaration was accompanied by an invitation to apply for armistice terms, the Germans, by accepting this invitation, would seem to have indicated approval of the terms of the Note. On their side also the Allied and Associated Powers, in view of the German acceptance of their invitation, would appear to have been morally, if not legally, bound to act in accordance with the declaration that accompanied it.

CHAPTER III

FROM ARMISTICE TO CONFERENCE (I)

THE importance of the interval between the signing of the Armistice of early November and the opening of the Peace Conference in early January has been rightly emphasized,¹ first, because of its length, which was almost one third of the total period from the end of the fighting to the conclusion of the Versailles Treaty; and, secondly, because it was the period when procedure was in a state of complete fluidity. It was a time of intense diplomatic activity, but of very little tangible progress, preparation for the Conference being combined with complete uncertainty as to the exact point at which it was to take charge of the peace negotiations and, consequently, as to its real nature when it should do so. While all the plans put forward during these weeks were concerned with processes leading to a general peace settlement, there were wide differences of view as to the various stages involved. What was referred to in these proposals as the forthcoming Conference or Congress was to be, though perhaps the most important, only one of several stages, another of which might be the conclusion of a preliminary treaty with Germany. The varying use of the words 'Conference' and 'Congress' was itself an indication of the uncertainty that existed.

'There is no essential difference between a Congress and a Conference,' wrote Sir E. Satow in one of the handbooks prepared by the British Foreign Office, 'but the former term is more frequently applied to assemblies of plenipotentiaries for the purpose of concluding peace and is regarded as implying a specially important occasion.'² Those using the word 'Congress' in the closing weeks of 1918 did so more specifically to denote an assembly in which enemy delegates would participate, and in November preparations were for the eventual meeting of such a body. In December, on the contrary, all preparation was for a 'Conference' of Allied and Associated Powers only, and this change of direction, dating officially from the London meetings of the Premiers, causes the period from 11th November to 12th January to fall naturally into two divisions. The first of these,

during which a Congress was the end in view, will be treated in this chapter.

The holding of such a gathering, in which enemy delegates would participate, depended upon the prior arrangement of a preliminary treaty (or treaties) of peace, and the idea of such preliminaries was inextricably interwoven with all the various conceptions as to procedure that were present in the minds of statesmen during the greater part of the process of peace-making. Only at times, as in November and February, was it dominant, but it was always present in the background until it faded out imperceptibly in April, leaving, however, some traces behind. In the handbook already mentioned Sir E. Satow pointed out that any formal assembly for the making of a general settlement after a war was usually preceded by a preliminary treaty, and that entry into formal discussion without such an introduction might be unwise.³ That this was the general Foreign Office view we know from two papers which Mr. D. H. Miller has reprinted. One of these, undated, is assigned to 1917 by Miller; the second paper was issued just a month before the Armistice.⁴ Both papers contemplated the settlement, with Germany at least, of all fundamental issues arising from the war as a desirable preliminary to the meeting of a Peace Congress. The second document put forward a plan for peace preliminaries with Germany and emphasized the fact that upon a satisfactory settlement of such preliminaries must depend enemy participation in the projected Congress, while the earlier paper pointed out the advantages of a definite treaty of peace that would facilitate demobilization.

While, however, the idea of a preliminary treaty was to play such an important part behind the scenes before and during the Peace Conference of 1919, many of those responsible for guiding affairs at this time were far from clear on the subject. The common phrase, 'Preliminary Treaty of Peace', was itself rather misleading, since, as was later pointed out in a Memorandum from the British Foreign Office, 'a state of belligerency cannot be brought to an end more than once'.⁵ It is necessary, therefore, at the outset to clarify the position. Though we refer loosely to a preliminary peace, we have in mind a treaty that would have been preliminary, while the peace that it brought with it would have been final, at least in the sense that it could only have been broken by a further declaration of war. Later negotiations would have been for the purpose of working out details, and in these

the ex-enemy States might have expected to participate. They would have led not to a further treaty of *peace*, but to a definitive treaty, an 'Acte Final' or 'Acte Général'.

Any approach to the task of peace-making by means of a preliminary treaty depended upon the giving of priority, first, to the settlement with Germany, and, secondly, to the consideration of the more fundamental parts of that settlement. There was indeed a strong and general tendency to concentrate upon issues affecting Germany, in spite of vigorous Italian opposition, but priority for the consideration of the fundamental problems that would have to be settled before any treaty of peace could be concluded was not secured until it was too late.

Various attempts were made to enumerate such problems, both before and after the opening of the Paris Conference, and there was a very definite similarity between all of these. Ten years later Colonel House wrote a Memorandum giving from memory his own views on the subject in the autumn of 1918, when he appears to have had in mind four items for a preliminary treaty: (a) Military, naval, and air clauses; (b) Reparations (a fixed sum to be named); (c) German frontiers ('drawn with a broad sweep with provision for later adjustment'); (d) 'A general but specific commitment regarding an association of nations.'⁶ With the possible exception of the fourth point the views of House may be regarded as typical.

Priority for such items as these, concerning mainly the Great Powers alone, was hindered in the first place by the constant pressure from other States, such as the British Dominions, desiring an early realization of their own aims (e.g., in the colonial sphere). The attitude of President Wilson, who wished to include a scheme for a League of Nations in whatever treaty might be concluded, was an important factor, and there was also the natural reluctance of the Great Powers to come to grips with problems that might divide them, resulting in a tendency to turn for the moment to matters of lesser import. Mr. Lloyd George has written of the early stages of the Conference itself: 'We were all feeling our way, and I had a sense that we were each of us trying to size up our colleagues, reconnoitring their respective positions, ascertaining their aims and how they stood in reference to the desiderata in which each of them was most deeply interested and involved.'⁷

It will be apparent that, unless a preliminary treaty could be arranged quickly, it might never materialize, for delay concerning

fundamental issues would enable the settlement of other matters to catch up, as indeed actually happened. For this reason the most favourable opportunity presented itself immediately after the Armistice and before the meeting of any formal assembly. The Four Great Powers which had arranged the Armistices had at their command the necessary machinery for the preparation of a treaty of peace with Germany in the Supreme War Council, expanded as it had been during the Armistice Session to include States such as Japan and Belgium, together with the inner steering committee of Premiers, or Premiers and Foreign Secretaries. 'Il paraîtrait donc indispensable que les Premiers Ministres et les Ministres des Affaires étrangères des quatre grandes Puissances se réunissent préalablement à Versailles pour arrêter entre eux les affaires que le Congrès aura à traiter (c'est-à-dire les Préliminaires de Paix).' Thus suggested the French draft of 21st November.⁸ Colonel House also had the procedure of the Armistice period in mind, for in his cable of 14th November he informed President Wilson that, while there were doubts as to the wisdom of the latter's participation in the formal Congress, every one wanted him to come over for the preliminary discussions, adding, 'It is at these meetings that peace terms will be worked out and determined, just as the informal conferences determined the German and Austrian Armistices.'⁹

In the agreement among the Allies to accept the Wilsonian Fourteen Points, etc., subject to limitations set forth in the Memorandum of Reservation forwarded to Washington on 4th November and accepted by the President, might have been found the basis for a preliminary treaty with Germany. America, with armies almost intact and economic power so overwhelming, was in a strong position for pushing forward the Wilsonian programme. Yet there was no early move.

The complete failure of American diplomacy to follow up its November success by securing the early embodiment and further elucidation of the Fourteen Points, etc., in a treaty of peace is one of the amazing features of this post-Armistice period. President Wilson could at this stage have challenged more vigorously, and with greater chances of success than were his in March 1919, the opposing French conception of settlement that was, perhaps, to be found in the actual military terms of the Armistice. Yet immediately after the dispatch of the Lansing Note on 5th November, the initiative was abandoned to the French, who put

forward the Allied Declaration of January 1917 as a basis for settlement alternative to the Wilsonian.¹⁰

American inaction during this critical period is more easily understood if various factors governing the President's policy are borne in mind. In the first place he was by no means disposed to favour the use of the November machinery and procedure for the further purpose of arranging an early peace, his general attitude being one of the main reasons why the combination of informal steering committee with formal Supreme Council was not continued. Secondly, he does not seem to have considered time to be of vital importance, for on the eve of the Armistice he was cabling a suggestion to Colonel House that it was desirable to wait for the establishment of settled Governments in central Europe before any negotiations were begun.¹¹ Thirdly, the procedure for the ratification of treaties laid down in the American Constitution, and his realization of the delaying power of the opposition in the Senate, caused him to desire that there should be one treaty only, final and comprehensive. Fourthly, his whole-hearted devotion to the establishment of a League of Nations both absorbed his energies to the exclusion of almost everything else and also made a leisurely approach to a settlement inevitable. Finally, there was the President's desire to come to Europe in person.

This Wilsonian determination, made clear in a cable dispatched on 14th November¹² and reluctantly accepted as unalterable by Colonel House in Paris and Mr. Lansing at home, threatened to raise important issues affecting the structure and conduct of the Peace Conference. His position as Head of State as well as Chief Minister might make his collaboration on equal terms with the European Premiers rather difficult, and his coming might open the way for the participation of other Heads of States, as at Vienna. M. Clemenceau was very much afraid of this in view of the ambitions and policies of President Poincaré. 'To admit one Chief of State without admitting all,' said the French Premier, 'seems to me an impossibility.'¹³ President Wilson's assumption that he would be asked to preside over the Conference, also made clear in the cable of 14th November, threatened that French control of procedure which M. Clemenceau hoped to wield from the chair.

It was partly because of these threatened complications and also because, as Mr. Frank Cobb explained in a confidential

memorandum, the moment the President sat in person with Premiers and Foreign Secretaries he would lose 'all the power that comes from distance and detachment',¹⁴ that Colonel House and others endeavoured to persuade him not to participate in any formal negotiations. Mr. D. H. Miller did, indeed, suggest that a solution of one difficulty might be provided by the creation of a special office of Honorary President for Wilson, but this idea was not taken up.¹⁵ The President was very much opposed to all suggestions that he should 'try to steer from the outside', and expressed something like resentment in his messages to Colonel House. He declared: 'I play the same part in our Government as the Prime Ministers play in theirs, the fact that I am head of the State is of no practical importance.'¹⁶ The Colonel was insistent that, in any case, his chief should announce his decision, since, in the meantime, all was 'being held in abeyance',¹⁷ and on 18th November, he cabled to point out the growing urgency of the matter. There was, he said, a definite tendency on the European side to postpone the whole process of peace-making, and he concluded: 'The sooner you announce your purpose of sailing on 3rd December the better. Until then no plans can be made.'¹⁸

A public announcement of the President's intentions was made from Washington and cabled to Paris on 19th November. It was definitely stated that Wilson was shortly to sail for Europe, but the extent of his participation in the forthcoming negotiations was left undefined. The wording of the announcement indicated the general fluidity of ideas as to procedure at the time. The President was coming, it was stated, 'for the purpose of taking part in the discussions and the settlement of the main features of the Treaty of Peace'. He would, however, not necessarily remain 'throughout the sessions of the formal Peace Conference'.¹⁹ In the covering message to Colonel House, there was an indication of the President's acceptance of M. Clemenceau's claim to the chair.

Whatever views may be expressed concerning the general wisdom or unwisdom of the President's decision to come to Europe, none can doubt that it prevented any American initiative during the month following the Armistice and was an important factor delaying any approach to a settlement. Indeed, had there been no other delaying factors, this would in itself have been quite sufficient to prevent the early conclusion of a treaty with

Germany. The presence of Colonel House as President Wilson's own mouthpiece had facilitated the conduct of the negotiations leading up to the Armistice, and his continuance in that capacity might have enabled the Supreme War Council to follow up with a treaty of peace. The moment the President decided to come in person, however, the position of his deputy was changed completely. All were then agreed, as the evidence plainly shows, that neither formal nor informal processes of negotiation could begin until after the President's arrival. Thus the Note which M. Jusserand handed to the State Department on 29th November referred to 'the peace preliminaries, which anyway cannot be actually determined until after the arrival in Paris of the President of the United States'.²⁰

There were, of course, other forces tending to delay the conclusion of peace. One characteristic of these November days is very obvious, a complete lack of driving power. It would seem that the Allied peoples in Europe, from their leaders downwards, had strained themselves to the uttermost to gain the final victory and then, thinking their position secure, had surrendered themselves to a complete relaxation that made further progress impossible for weeks. This was particularly the case in Britain, where the sudden and complete abandonment of all war-time restraints at eleven o'clock on the morning of 11th November foreshadowed the whole course of European history during the next twenty years. For the moment, perhaps, with the German warships on their way to Scapa Flow, and all the German colonies in Allied occupation, it was a luxury that this country could afford. One result of this sudden change of outlook in Britain was the plunge into the controversies of domestic politics associated with the general election of December, British statesmen being driven by the circumstances connected with the electoral contest to talk of the demobilization of our armies rather than to face up to the European situation, and in such circumstances there could hardly be any definite lead from London until the election was over.

The French seem also to have been in favour of delay, though M. Clemenceau at first talked of completing the preliminary discussions in three weeks.²¹ 'The coming of President Wilson naturally changes some of our plans in preparing for the Conference,' he telegraphed to Mr. Lloyd George; 'it seems to me that we cannot begin the work before the President arrives.

Besides, I think it is not a bad plan to let the German Revolution settle down for a while in order that we may know before proceeding what we have before us.'²² Before the actual arrival of President Wilson, the French Premier was talking of putting off negotiations until January and expressing the view that the drafting of a treaty might take a year.²³ A message from Colonel House to the State Department in Washington, dated 4th December, specifically mentioned that, while the British Government would be ready by 16th December, M. Clemenceau thought that date much too early.²⁴

Such initiative as there was during this period immediately following the Armistice seems, however, to have been French, and it was concerned rather with the planning of the eventual Congress than with actually hastening the conclusion of a preliminary treaty, though this was contemplated as a first step. It is necessary to bear in mind the fact that during these weeks the Quai d'Orsay was much more concerned with matters of high policy than with items of organization and procedure in themselves, these latter being regarded as mere instruments for the achievement of objects connected with the former. France took the initiative because of her vital interest in Continental affairs and because she wanted to make the most of the situation resulting from the Allied victory. Her main concerns, overriding all other considerations, were the securing of Anglo-American approval for her security programme and the cancellation or modification of the Treaty of London. It is in this light that we must view the plans for the Conference emanating from the Quai d'Orsay in the second half of November.

The detailed ideas of the French diplomatists concerning the processes of making the peace settlement were first given in a tentative and probably semi-official scheme, entitled 'Sur le Congrès de la Paix'. There were two versions of this, the first dated 15th November, and the second, varying very slightly, dated 21st November. Neither text was, as far as we know, officially communicated to any other Government, but, being informally circulated in Paris, they were passed on by Colonel House to Washington, and, presumably, by other Allied representatives to their respective capitals. The French envisaged preliminary and informal meetings of the Premiers and Foreign Secretaries of the four leading Allied States, as a result of which there would emerge, firstly, a preliminary treaty to be dictated to the Germans, and,

secondly, an agreement among the Allies as to the working mechanism of the Peace Congress. As a basis for discussions leading to such agreement concerning organization and procedure, the scheme itself was put forward. As a plan for a Congress never to be held it is to some extent irrelevant to a study of the origins of the Conference that actually took place, yet in various ways it contributed towards the shaping of that Conference.²⁵

It began with an examination of the precedents provided by previous Congresses at Vienna (1814-15), Paris (1856), and Berlin (1878), and then set forth four general conclusions resulting (a) Some agreement as to a basis for deliberation had preceded the holding of each of these earlier assemblies; (b) the presidency and the control of the secretariat had in each case been in the hands of the Power acting as host; (c) a small number of delegates only had been allotted to each participating State; (d) these delegates had usually included the Premier (or Chancellor) or the Foreign Minister.

Then in the third section of the scheme were set out, in full, sixteen Rules of Procedure, which were afterwards adopted, with modifications, to govern the working of the Conference when it met in January 1919. It was in this sphere that the Quai d'Orsay through its November initiative made its chief contribution to the work of preparation.

The fourth section provided the first attempt to enumerate categories of States to be represented. The inclusion of enemy countries was a sign that the idea of a full Congress then governed all plans, but had no ultimate significance. The classification of Allied States, on the other hand, was not without its bearing on the future Conference. There were in the first place the Allies concerning whose belligerent status there could be no question and whose participation, at least in any formal meetings, was assured. These had all been represented at the Conference of December 1917, and had also taken part in the negotiations leading to the Armistice. They were: the United States, Great Britain, France, Italy, Japan, Belgium, Serbia, Greece and Portugal. With these were now to be associated the newly recognized States of Poland and Czechoslovakia. Montenegro was also placed in this group, but her status was at that moment becoming very doubtful. Russia and Roumania, the two States which had made separate treaties with the enemy, were listed for separate treatment, the second version suggesting that an

Inter-Allied Committee with Russian advisers might be set up to protect Russian interests during the peace negotiations, and thus showing quite clearly that direct Russian participation was in no way contemplated.

An attempt was made to distinguish between the belligerents proper, listed above, and those countries whose state of war with Germany had been purely theoretical. These were: Brazil, China and Liberia, together with the seven States of Central America (Cuba, Haiti, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Honduras, Panama and Costa Rica). Brazil, China and Liberia were to have separate membership, but the Central American States, it was suggested, should be represented by the United States to avoid overcrowding at the Congress. It is to be noted that Siam was not mentioned in the draft, though the French afterwards secured for it a place at the Conference. The four States of South America which had merely broken off diplomatic relations with Germany (Bolivia, Ecuador, Peru and Uruguay) were not included among the Allies as listed here, and their being invited to join in any discussions was to depend upon the rules laid down for the participation of neutrals. With them were linked embryonic States such as Finland, which had not yet been accorded recognition.

The important question of the position to be accorded to the British Dominions received its first serious consideration, as far as we now know, in these French documents. The first version declared definitely against any separate representation for these countries, the somewhat doubtful analogy of the States of the American Union being quoted in defence of this exclusion, but the revised text seemed to allow of some form of participation for the Dominions, while suggesting that it be strictly defined.

The last three sections of the scheme were concerned with the agenda for the Congress and, to a very limited extent, with the organization to deal with it. With regard to Congress organization there was, indeed, nothing more than a suggestion that preparatory commissions composed of plenipotentiaries should be established to prepare the ground. The agenda was, on the contrary, very comprehensively outlined. It was prefaced by four basic principles that were to govern its consideration: (a) self-determination; (b) minority rights; (c) renunciation of secret and sectional treaties; (d) inviolability of Allied territory as on 1st August 1914. As a basis for the discussion of details the Fourteen Points, although accepted before the Armistice, were now rejected

as being too vague, and the Allied Declaration of 10th January 1917 was put forward instead. The agenda was set forth in two main divisions: (a) issues arising directly from the war and affecting the peace settlement proper; (b) matters connected with the general reorganization of international relations to follow the peace. This clear-cut division foreshadowed a Congress that was to pass through two distinct stages, but it was in this sphere of the planning of its work that the French scheme had the least effect upon the Conference of 1919.

The one immediately tangible result of the French November initiative was in connection with the choice of a meeting-place for the Congress or Conference, a matter not actually touched upon in the plan outlined above. The efforts of the Quai d'Orsay to secure the holding of the meetings in or near Paris were, of course, assisted by the fact that the military headquarters of the Supreme War Council were already established at Versailles, and the part played by France in the military sphere made it almost inevitable that, if the negotiations were to be conducted on Allied soil, that soil would be French. Certain efforts were made, however, to arrange for a neutral meeting-place. Before Colonel House left for Europe he and the President had discussed the matter and had, it would seem, tentatively agreed upon the holding of the Congress in Switzerland, Lausanne being suggested as suitable. After his arrival in Europe House seems to have put Geneva in place of Lausanne entirely on his own initiative, and he and Mr. Lloyd George came to a provisional understanding on the subject.²⁶ The British Foreign Office had suggested Geneva as early as 1917,²⁷ and, according to his own account, the Premier now desired a neutral atmosphere.²⁸ Signor Orlando appears to have been ready to accept any meeting-place that the Americans felt able to approve.

The question was discussed during an informal conversation between M. Clemenceau, Mr. Lloyd George, and Colonel House on 29th October, when the Colonel asked the French Premier what place he had in mind for the eventual peace-making and received the natural reply: 'Versailles.'²⁹ Mr. Lloyd George countered by referring to his understanding with House concerning Geneva, and there the matter was left for the moment. The Anglo-American understanding was completely broken as a result of a surprising change in the President's attitude reflected in a cable of 7th November. In this he went out of his way to attack

Switzerland as being 'saturated with every poisonous element and open to every hostile influence', and, passing over the claims of the Netherlands, suggested Versailles.³⁰ This change of attitude on the part of Washington was due to a fear that there would be inadequate protection for the President in a neutral country, whereas in France the United States military and special police would be on the spot to ensure his safety.³¹

Colonel House noted this change of attitude with regret, but he had to accept it and to endeavour to persuade his British colleagues to approve. To prepare the ground he had an interview with Lord Northcliffe, which resulted in the appearance in the *London Times* of 11th November of an article putting forward the symbolic desirability of Versailles. By 20th November the British Government appears to have accepted the idea, for about that date Lord Derby, the Ambassador in Paris, indicated his Government's practical acquiescence. By that time the idea of a Preliminary Inter-Allied Conference was coming to the fore, and the Ambassador intimated that the London Government was ready to agree to its being held in Paris. As to the meeting-place of the ultimate Congress, the Preliminary Conference must itself theoretically decide, but, as Lord Derby pointed out, the choice of Paris for the first stage of peace-making would in practice be decisive.³²

The most vital development of these November days was, indeed, the evolution of this idea of an Inter-Allied Conference, to which Lord Derby referred. By the end of the month the holding of the Peace Congress was in reality indefinitely postponed, the idea of an early treaty had receded into the background, and all attention was turned towards preparation for a meeting of delegates from all Allied States. How did this come about? For the complete answer to this question we must await publication of all relevant documents, but the main outlines are beginning to appear.

The vital matter was the manner in which the statesmen of the Four Great Allied Powers were to consult with the representatives of the other Allied States with regard to the peace settlement, for obviously some such consultation there must be before even a preliminary treaty with Germany could be drawn up. The precedent of the Armistice discussions suggested that Japan and the smaller States which had played an effective part in the war (Belgium, Serbia, Greece and Portugal) should be in some

way associated with the preliminaries, but that other States should not be consulted at this stage. The calling in of delegates from the five States named would have been at the discretion of the Four Great Powers. In one way or another, however, during November, while the European statesmen were awaiting the arrival of President Wilson, there was developed the idea of a preliminary, formal gathering of delegates from all the Allied and Associated States, who were to be present as of right.

It is very probable that the precedent of December 1917 had some influence in this direction, for on that earlier occasion, not only had all the Allied States been permitted to participate in formal sessions, but the Great Powers had learned how such an assembly could be controlled, in spite of their previous fears. There must, of course, have been considerable pressure from the Lesser Allies at this time, and the various Great Powers had their own reasons for wishing to propitiate particular small States. It is reasonable to assume that the demand of the British Dominions for special consideration, backed as was inevitable, even though it might be with reluctance, by the Imperial Government, was an important factor, and it is perhaps worthy of note that the resolution of the London Conference, which was the first official declaration of intention to hold a formal Inter-Allied Conference, contained a special reference to the status of the Dominions.

The French scheme of 15th and 21st November contemplated the purely informal consultation of some of the Lesser Allies by the Great Powers during the arrangement of preliminaries, this consultation to be at the discretion of the Great Powers; and we have, set forth in detail by Mr. D. H. Miller, the reaction of the American advance-guard in Paris to this general conception. We do not know exactly how far the President or the State Department were influenced by these American views from Paris, but they are certainly of interest as showing definite trends at this time of fluid ideas. In a Memorandum prepared for Colonel House, commenting on the French schemes, Miller emphasized the fact that the holding of a full Congress was an essential part of the American programme in order to ensure 'open discussion at the Peace Congress between representatives of the Central Powers and of those opposed to them of the conditions of peace'. This would seem to have ruled out not only a preliminary treaty, but also any formal Conference of Allies to precede the Congress. Yet Miller went on to suggest that complete agreement among

the Allied and Associated Powers was an 'essential prerequisite' of the whole process of peace-making. This pre-agreement was to be arrived at by informal means, but the procedure outlined went beyond that contemplated by the Quai d'Orsay, for the Lesser Allies were to be more definitely associated with it.³³

The American suggestion was that all States interested in any particular question, including of course the Great Powers, who were held to be interested in every question, should participate informally, but as of right, in any discussion of that question, and the procedure to be followed with regard to matters concerning Belgium was given by way of example. First would come an investigation and discussion of those issues by the representatives of the Great Powers and Belgium, leading to an agreement on matters of principle. This process would be followed by the drawing up of a detailed memorandum, which, after being approved by the Great Powers and Belgium, would then be submitted for the approval of the Allied and Associated States as a whole. Though Mr. Miller desired all such preliminary consultation to be informal, the latter part of his suggested procedure would seem to go very far towards formality. We may sum up by saying that American influence appears to have been opposed to any preliminary treaty or any formal preliminary Conference, but in favour of (a) the right of interested States to be consulted, and (b) the necessity of securing a preliminary agreement among all the Allies. It should be noted, moreover, that the Lesser Allies which had not been consulted at the time of the Armistice, and which, had the French views prevailed, would not now have been consulted, were mainly States of Central and South America, which would naturally be championed by the United States.

It can, at any rate, be affirmed with reasonable certainty that within a fortnight after the Armistice the idea of some kind of preliminary Inter-Allied Conference was gaining ground. In his message of 20th November, recounting the conversation with Lord Derby already mentioned, Colonel House recorded the British Ambassador's belief that the London Government had 'definitely accepted the proposal that the Inter-Allied Conference should be held in Paris'.³⁴ What shape this conference was to take was not clear, but a message from Mr. Balfour to Lord Derby, which House referred to in his cable, spoke of the difficulty of changing the meeting-place of the final Congress after the experts had gathered in Paris and an elaborate organization had

been set up there. Something more than informal consultation seems to have been contemplated, and there appears to have been an Anglo-French understanding as to the holding of a Conference, and also its place of meeting.

On 29th November Ambassador Jusserand handed to the State Department in Washington an official version of the French plan.³⁵ Much of this, as had been the case with the earlier versions, was taken up with the elaboration of a detailed agenda under the same headings as before: (a) War Settlement and (b) Future International Order. A new feature was an outline sketch of an organization to deal with it: seven territorial commissions and seven general committees. Another change was the rejection of the Allied Declaration of 1917 as a basis equally with the Wilsonian programme and the substitution of a 'methodical statement of the questions to be taken up' as the only guide. Since, however, these portions of the draft had only a negligible influence on the actual Conference they claim no further attention here.

The feature most important in its bearing upon the Paris Conference was the setting forth of the formula that was to be adopted in January to govern the participation of the different classes of States. As shown in the previous chapter, the basic principle of this formula had been brought forward by Mr. Lloyd George at the beginning of the Armistice negotiations on 29th October,³⁶ and it was that the minor States should be allowed to take part only when questions affecting them were under discussion. The Jusserand document elaborated this, laying down that it should be the right of the 'Great victorious Powers' alone to be represented at all meetings, while delegates from the other Allied and Associated States would be summoned to participate in 'sessions designated for their special affairs'. Delegates from neutral States and States in process of formation might be called in at the discretion of the Great Powers when the interests of such States were at stake. The number of representatives to be allotted to the various classes of States was also considered, and it was suggested that the Great Powers should have a maximum of three, the Lesser Allies two, and neutrals, etc., one only.

Those who prepared this official document still looked upon the conclusion of a preliminary treaty as an essential prelude to any formal Conference or Congress. 'The arrival of President Wilson in Paris in the middle of December' would, it was stated, 'enable the Four Great Powers to agree among themselves upon

the conditions of the peace preliminaries to be imposed severally on the enemy without any discussion with him.' Whatever Anglo-French understanding had been arrived at concerning the holding of an Inter-Allied Conference, there was no reference to it in the text presented by M. Jusserand. A significant feature of the draft was, however, the proposed exclusion of enemy delegates from participation while issues arising from the war were being decided. This suggestion would turn the projected Congress into an Inter-Allied Conference during its more vital stage, and only an agreement to enter upon this stage before the conclusion of any preliminary treaty was necessary to produce the Paris Conference as we know it. In view of the decision arrived at in London only a few days after the presentation of this Draft of 29th November, and in view of the evidence provided by Derby's remarks to House on 20th November, it is reasonable to suppose that M. Clemenceau had already, in agreement with Mr. Lloyd George, come to think of the Inter-Allied Conference as preceding any preliminaries, though the officials of the Quai d'Orsay, proceeding on the basis of earlier plans, were not yet fully aware of this.

CHAPTER IV

FROM ARMISTICE TO CONFERENCE (II)

FRENCH initiative seems to have been at least partly responsible for the holding of the meetings of 2nd and 3rd December, usually referred to as the London Conference. Apparently it was somewhere about 15th November that M. Clemenceau telegraphed to Mr. Lloyd George suggesting that, pending the arrival of President Wilson, they should meet either in Paris or London to draw up 'travaux préparatoires' on the procedure to be followed. M. Clemenceau was having a plan drawn up and he hoped that the British Premier would also elaborate one, meanwhile he would ask Colonel House and Baron Sonnino to do the same, so that in two or three days agreement would be reached.¹ Mr. Lloyd George agreed with the idea of holding such a meeting, but wished it to be in London, whither he proceeded to invite the Allied statesmen. To Colonel House he wrote: 'M. Clemenceau is coming to London on 1st December, and I earnestly hope you will be able to come also, as a number of urgent questions require discussion. As I shall not be able to attend any conference in Paris before the election of 14th December this is especially important. I am inviting Signor Orlando also.'²

M. Clemenceau and M. Pichon arrived in Britain, accompanied by Marshal Foch and General Weygand, on Saturday, 30th November, and that same evening there were preliminary and informal Franco-British consultations at Downing Street, Marshal Foch putting forward the French policy with regard to the Rhineland, in the absence of M. Clemenceau through a social engagement. Formal and full meetings of the Premiers and Foreign Secretaries of Great Britain, France, and Italy, with the addition of the military, were held on the following Monday and Tuesday, 2nd and 3rd December.³

It was probably the original intention of the French that the Allied leaders should meet to arrive at definite decisions concerning the procedure to be followed in the coming weeks, and they may have purposed to bring forward their November Plan as a basis for discussion. The meetings as originally planned were, however, never held, because there was no American participation.

Since President Wilson was about to sail for Europe Colonel House was, from the first, not in favour of the holding of any such consultations at that juncture, for his own status would have been rather uncertain. In the event he was too ill to go to London, and America was completely unrepresented. M. Clemenceau seems to have come to agree with House, to whom, before departing for London, he gave 'his solemn word of honour that he would discuss no question of any importance with George', while expressing the view 'that the meeting was of no importance'. The French Premier also is supposed to have made the further surprising statement 'that he thought that George had asked him to come over simply for electioneering purposes'.⁴

At the outset it was realized that the absence of any American representative altered the whole character of the gathering, and it was resolved that Mr. Balfour should acquaint Colonel House with all decisions, this being afterwards done through Lord Derby. At the conclusion of the proceedings it was decided that all decisions, except those of minor importance requiring immediate action, were to be regarded as provisional and subject to the approval of President Wilson.

In these circumstances there could be little real progress, though certain important but tentative arrangements were made. There was now for the first time a provisional decision by the Great European Powers to summon an Inter-Allied Conference before the conclusion of any preliminary treaty, and to hold it on French soil. It was also provisionally decided that Japan should be admitted to a position of at least theoretical equality with the Great European Powers and the United States, this decision foreshadowing the Council of Ten. The number of plenipotentiaries to be chosen by each Great Power was fixed at five. There was also a resolution providing that delegates from the British Dominions and India should attend as additional members when questions directly affecting them were under consideration. The French general plan for the eventual Congress or Conference was, however, not considered at all.

The question of the agenda for the Conference, when at length it should meet, was indirectly affected by preliminary decisions of the London session with regard to the proposed trial of the ex-Kaiser and the exaction of Reparations from the defeated enemy States, issues that were being forced up from below, especially during the British election campaign. The British law

officers had reported to the Imperial War Cabinet in favour of bringing the ex-Kaiser to trial, and this policy was now endorsed by the Allied statesmen, but no further action could be taken at the moment in the absence of American approval. With regard to Reparations there was a preliminary decision to set up a commission to report upon the amount the enemy countries could reasonably be required to pay and the methods by which payment was to be made. This provisional decision, however, was not followed up before the meeting of the Peace Conference in January.

The London session had, nevertheless, brought the idea of a preliminary Inter-Allied Conference officially to the fore, and there was now no possibility of the early and preliminary treaty that had been contemplated during November. As Sir William Tyrrell pointed out to Mr. D. H. Miller on 4th December,⁵ matters relating to any ultimate Congress must be left until an indefinite future. Questions of procedure relating to the Inter-Allied Conference had become the only important ones. Yet, though any instalment of the final settlement was indefinitely postponed, an early meeting of the Conference would appear to have been quite possible. The London resolution providing for its summoning had suggested that the date should be fixed after the arrival of President Wilson, who actually sailed from New York on 4th December to arrive in Paris on the 14th. His arrival coincided with the British general election, and thus the two obstacles that had prevented any real progress during the first month after the Armistice were removed at once.

The President had previously expressed the hope that the date for the Conference might be fixed to fit in with his own programme, and Colonel House did accordingly try to arrange for the opening to be on 16th December.⁶ Mr. Balfour expressed the view that this date would be perfectly suitable to the British Government, but there does not appear to have been any initiative from London at this stage. Though the British electoral campaign had ended on 14th December, there was, owing to the special emergency arrangements, a time-lag between the polling and the declaration of results, and consequently Mr. Lloyd George could not be sure of his mandate until Saturday, 28th December. The real opposition to the efforts of Colonel House seems, however, at this point to have come from Paris, but willingness to postpone the opening of the Conference for a second month seems to have been general. Just after the London session Sir William Wiseman

told Miller that it had been decided to hold none but informal consultations until after January.⁷

As the first month had not brought peace, an extension of the period of truce was necessary, for the Armistice of 11th November was to endure for thirty-six days only, and the time would thus expire on the morning of 17th December.⁸ By a decision of the London session, arrived at on the afternoon of 2nd December, Marshal Foch was authorized to renew the Armistice for a further period of one month,⁹ and the actual renewal took place at Trier on 13th December. The Germans were still hoping for an early peace that would bring with it the repatriation of prisoners of war and the lifting of the blockade, and on this occasion some kind of promise appears to have been given to the effect that the process of peace-making was to be speeded up.¹⁰

The most important event between the London meetings and the opening of the actual Conference was the arrival of President Wilson, whose general attitude, as yet unexpressed, would inevitably play an important part in the development of organization and procedure. Just before his sailing a copy of the official version of the French plan for the Conference had been forwarded to him from the State Department and, as far as we know, apart from the regular cables of Colonel House, this was the President's only source of information as to the various projects that were being put forward in Europe.¹¹ He himself was largely an unknown factor. Even his own delegation, including his Secretary of State, were largely in ignorance of his general views, and their ignorance was only partially dispelled by his one statement to the members of Inquiry as a whole aboard the *George Washington*.¹² The European statesmen were even more uncertain concerning the President, and a number of important visits and conversations were almost inevitable after his arrival, in order that views might be exchanged. It may reasonably be contended that the need for such an exchange was in itself sufficient to postpone the meeting of the Conference, even had there been no other delaying factors.

On his arrival in Paris on 14th December President Wilson was met by General Smuts, who had gone out to discuss various matters with him, and during the next few weeks there was an almost ceaseless round of conversations, speeches and social functions in Paris, Rome, London and elsewhere. During the discussions between the President and the European statesmen

matters of high policy were inevitably the main topics of conversation, but the general character of the forthcoming negotiations had also to be considered. We have a fairly complete account of one important exchange of views, at Buckingham Palace, after President Wilson's arrival in London on 29th December, the British Premier and Foreign Secretary visiting him in a room of the suite allotted to him.¹³ On the views expressed at this Buckingham Palace interview and on the statement made aboard the *George Washington* we have to rely for knowledge of the views concerning procedure which Wilson brought with him to Europe.

It will be recalled that, when the announcement of his intention to come in person to Europe had been made, the question of the extent of his participation in the actual processes of peace-making had been left open, and this matter of participation was bound up with the whole question of the procedure to be followed, and especially with its formality or informality. The suggestion had been made by Colonel House that, since all the vital decisions would be made at informal preliminary gatherings, the President's presence at formal sessions would be unnecessary as well as unwise, but the latter appeared to resent this suggestion and inferred that the French and British leaders desired to exclude him from the formal Conference or Congress lest he might there 'lead the weaker nations against them'.¹⁴ Taken by itself, this remark may give a very false impression concerning the President's real views as to procedure by suggesting that he favoured formality. In order to reconcile this statement with our general knowledge of Wilsonian ideas we must, however, suppose simply that he resented any attempt made to exclude him from whatever processes might be adopted. The idea of informality certainly continued to be very much in the air, even after the provisional decisions of London. Thus on 5th December, or thereabouts, M. Clemenceau told Colonel House that to avoid the President's personal attendance at the formal Conference he would willingly go to his house in the mornings, just as they had met in House's *salon* during the Armistice proceedings, and then have 'more formal meetings of the delegates at the Quai d'Orsay to endorse what was done at the morning meetings'.¹⁵

President Wilson most certainly favoured informality of procedure during all stages preliminary to the final Congress. While the European statesmen had in London decided upon the procedure that involved the calling of a formal Preliminary

Conference to be followed at some future date by a full Congress, he, as his remarks during the voyage showed, was thinking of one formal assembly only, and that the final one. He told the experts of Inquiry that only the outlines of the future world order could be laid down in Paris, and that there would be no time for a discussion of details because there was to be only one Conference [*sic*].¹⁶ Unless we are to credit him with a prophetic insight enabling him to see that in actual practice the Inter-Allied Conference would completely take the place of the contemplated Congress we are driven to assume that he was ignoring the whole London conception of procedure and giving as fact his own ideas as to what should be.

Whatever doubt there may be as to the meaning of his *George Washington* statement, however, there can be none concerning the very definite views he expressed to Mr. Lloyd George and Mr. Balfour. These statesmen found him very definitely opposed to the holding of any formal Inter-Allied Conference since, as he pointed out, such a procedure would make any ultimate Congress a sham.¹⁷ He recognized, and indeed emphasized, the need for preliminary consultations between representatives of the Four Great Powers, in which delegates from the minor States would join on invitation, but urged that these preliminaries should be completely informal. He was, in fact, in favour of the general procedure contemplated in the November Plan, with the important exception that, for reasons connected with the American Constitution, he did not desire to interpose a preliminary treaty between the informal agreement among the Allies and the meeting of the formal Congress.

This conception of complete informality of all preliminary procedure President Wilson continued to put forward even after the meetings in Paris had actually begun, since he realized that proceedings would tend to become final as they became formal. His point of view was not, however, really understood in Paris and London. In reporting the President's views to the Imperial War Cabinet, Mr. Lloyd George professed inability to see any real difference between an agreement among the Allies arrived at informally and one resulting from a formal Conference, and Lord Curzon deprecatingly contrasted the President's 'very loose talk' with the definite proposals of the French.¹⁸

This emphasis upon the importance of informality may have caused President Wilson to be less determined to be present

during the formal proceedings to follow. This was, at any rate, the information conveyed to Mr. Lloyd George and his colleagues by Sir William Wiseman on 16th December,¹⁹ and this evidence is confirmed by that of Mr. Lansing.²⁰ The President did not mean that if a formal Preliminary Conference were held he would necessarily not be present, but his policy was to prevent the holding of such a Conference. M. Clemenceau, on the contrary, favoured formality, since he felt sure of his ability to control a conference, and he urged President Wilson to attend formal sessions in person, thus completely changing his own former position. This change of attitude on the part of the French Premier was probably due mainly to his realization that Wilson's presence was not, after all, going to challenge his own position, and partly to his desire for formality. It does not seem necessary to suppose, with Mr. Lloyd George, that the Frenchman had weighed up the American and discovered him to be amenable, or to argue, with Mr. Lansing, that the object was to reduce the President to the level of the others.

It is evident that, though preliminary conversations involving all the Allies were now certain to take place, it was by no means so certain that they would develop into a formal Conference. President Wilson's general attitude shows this, and it must be remembered that he had no part in the London decision. Evidence of uncertainty on this point appears to lie in a resolution of the Imperial War Cabinet demanding separate representation for the Dominions at the Peace Conference or the Allied Preliminary Conference, '*should it be held*'.²¹

Meanwhile, however, preparations for the holding of the Conference were proceeding, and the November Plan, intended for a Congress, was now adapted to the new purpose. As early as 20th November, indeed, Lord Derby had intimated to Colonel House that, the place of meeting having been settled, he intended to hasten preparations for the reception of the British Delegation.²² Then immediately after the London decision the Quai d'Orsay appears to have begun the issue of invitations to the Lesser Allies to send delegates to Paris, but not in accordance with any approved plan. To what States, indeed, were invitations to be sent, since the Armistice precedent was no longer applicable?

The French evidently acted in accordance with the ideas expressed in their drafts, and some, at any rate, of those States which had either not gone beyond the rupture of diplomatic

relations with Germany or had been content with a purely formal declaration of war, did not receive invitations and were consequently dissatisfied. A British Note to Paris, dated 11th December, referred to 'the cases of Brazil and Uruguay, which countries have given us frequent proofs of sympathy and are uneasy at not having been invited'.²³ Some agreement as to the constitution of the Conference, a matter left over from London, was obviously required, and the British Note referred to asked the Quai d'Orsay to submit a scheme.

In response to this request the French Government made proposals to London, intimating that, if the Foreign Office approved, it was willing to make suggestions to the various interested parties. Our only knowledge of the French proposals made at this juncture is derived from the Pichon Note of 13th December as reproduced by Miller.²⁴ This did not give a list of States entitled to membership but dealt with categories instead. First came the Great Powers, which, as had been decided at London, were to have five representatives each. Then it was suggested that the general body of Lesser Allies should have three representatives each, but no definition of an Allied State was included, so that the special issues raised by the British Note were not directly touched upon. The third category was that of States such as Poland and Czechoslovakia, newly recognized, which might be invited to send one delegate each at the discretion of the Allies, if issues affecting them came up for discussion. Enemy representation during the Inter-Allied Conference was not, of course, considered.

It would seem that these proposals of 13th December must have been elaborated later in the month, and some specific references to the position of the British Dominions included. Mr. Lloyd George tells us of a discussion of the French proposals at 'the last meeting of the Imperial War Cabinet in the year 1918',²⁵ and it is probable that it was the meeting to which the British Premier reported on his conversations with President Wilson at Buckingham Palace (i.e., some time after 25th December). References at this meeting to French proposals contained in a telegram from Lord Derby and to a telegram to Paris to be sent in reply, suggest that some elaboration of the Pichon Scheme had been submitted, for it is hardly likely that a telegram in reply to the communication of 13th December would have been deferred for so long, and moreover, the earlier Pichon Note did not refer to the issues affecting the Dominions which were now vigorously discussed.²⁶

Mr. Hughes and Sir Robert Borden expressed complete dissatisfaction with the French proposals as far as they affected the representation of the Dominions at the Conference, these proposals presumably following the London decision and providing for the attendance of Dominion delegates as additional members of the British Delegation only. The Australian argued that the Quai d'Orsay was giving to his country a place inferior to that of a neutral such as Sweden, and Borden declared that 'if the French proposals were adopted as put forward in Lord Derby's telegram, the result upon public opinion in Canada would be such as he did not care to suggest or even contemplate'.²⁷ The Canadian Premier wanted separate representation for the Dominions and participation upon the same basis as that of Belgium, while at the same time he urged the creation of a British Empire panel. It appears that the Dominions also wanted to have three representatives each, as the French had suggested that number for the Lesser Allies in general.

The Dominion leaders gained the support of the Imperial War Cabinet and the British Government for their point of view. It was decided: (a) that the position and status of the Dominions and India should be exactly the same as that of Belgium, and (b) that a British Empire panel should also be created. A telegram to Paris, already drafted, was to be revised in accordance with these decisions.²⁸ What British views concerning any other items of the French proposals were set forth in this telegram we do not know. Nor do we know of any further moves from Paris before the actual proceedings began there in January.

All definite decisions as to membership and participation were postponed until then, and little progress towards such decisions had been made after the London meetings. Yet some of the problems involved had at least been discussed. With regard to the general questions of the planning of the work and the establishment of an organization to deal with it there does not appear to have been even a discussion. The French, as the Pichon Note of 13th December shows, continued to adhere to the general programme of the November Plan, and to contemplate two distinct stages of the negotiations, consideration of issues arising directly from the war having precedence over any consideration of the future international order. The British and Americans, however, showed no inclination to accept these elaborate plans of the Quai d'Orsay as bases for the Conference, but they also

showed no sign of bringing forward alternative plans of their own, preferring to wait upon events. 'Conference with Tyrrell and Crowe convinces me,' ran a telegram from Mr. D. H. Miller in London to Colonel House in Paris on 6th December, 'that no programme of procedure for the Inter-Allied Conferences can be agreed upon in advance, and that it will be necessary for the President to have his own programme of subjects to be discussed and of the order of discussion.'²⁹ Yet President Wilson brought with him no detailed plan.

American pressure, however, foreshadowed the failure of the French policy of separating the peace settlement proper from the establishment of a new international order, and of giving definite priority to the former. Opposition to the French division of the agenda was made clear by President Wilson during his first conversation with Colonel House after his arrival on French soil, on 14th December, when the President declared his intention of making the League 'the centre of the whole programme'.³⁰ Mr. Lloyd George also, in reporting upon the conversation at Buckingham Palace, declared of the President that 'what he was anxious about was that the League of Nations should be the first subject discussed at the Peace Conference'.³¹

It will be apparent that very little had indeed been decided as to the method of conducting the peace negotiations before the actual opening of the Conference in January. The only comprehensive plans had come from Paris and these had not been accepted by the other Allies, though they were not without some influence on the preparations that were made. At London there was a definite decision to hold a Preliminary Conference of Allies and to hold it on French soil, and a general rule to govern the relations between Great Powers and minor States was approved. Yet there was no decision as to membership or representation apart from the allotting of five delegates to each of the Great Powers. Moreover, in spite of later discussion of these points, there was no decision before January. No decision had been arrived at concerning the planning of the work of the Conference. Thus when the statesmen began to assemble in Paris early in January they were confronted with the necessity of coming quickly to conclusions concerning a large number of vital issues. The long interval between Armistice and Conference had produced neither a preliminary treaty nor a comprehensive agreement concerning the Conference itself.

CHAPTER V

THE GENESIS OF THE CONFERENCE

ON the afternoon of Sunday, 12th January 1919, the President of the United States and his Secretary of State, together with the Premiers and Foreign Ministers of Great Britain, France and Italy, met in M. Pichon's room at the Quai d'Orsay and, according to the rather arbitrary convention now generally accepted, inaugurated the varied proceedings grouped together under the general heading of 'The Paris Peace Conference'. 'Yesterday afternoon,' wrote Professor J. T. Shotwell, 'as the papers will have told you, the first meeting of the Allied Powers took place. I suppose the whole world knows as much about it as we do, however, for only those present could tell what happened, and they won't.'¹

These Allied leaders met, accompanied by their military advisers and the French ministers responsible for the departments of Commerce, Munitions and Marine, the meeting being afterwards listed in the British records as one of the Supreme War Council, and their proceedings opened with a discussion of the extent to which the Germans had fulfilled the existing terms of the Armistice, and the conditions for renewal on its expiration a few days hence. Mr. Lansing has suggested that it may have been by the pre-arrangement of M. Clemenceau that the first meeting in Paris took this form, since such an opening would facilitate his assumption of a general direction of the proceedings.² Be that as it may, there was undoubtedly some confusion as to the purpose of the meeting, for, after the discussion of military and naval matters had been in progress for some time, Mr. Lloyd George intervened to say that he had thought the meeting had been summoned 'to discuss questions preliminary to the more formal Conferences [*sic*] on peace'.³ It was subsequently agreed that the meeting of the Supreme War Council should stand adjourned and, the military having withdrawn, that the statesmen 'should now discuss questions connected with the Peace Conferences'.⁴

Thus emerged the Supreme Council of the Peace Conference to begin the first 'Conversation', the British Minutes of this being

listed separately from those of the Supreme War Council meeting and headed 'Secretary's Notes of a Conversation held in M. Pichon's Room', which heading became the conventional formula. This Supreme Council was the direct heir of the various political conferences of the Allies during the war years and at the time of the Armistice, and at Paris it was to assume several forms. It was not, however, in any of these forms to act as an inner steering committee to guide the deliberations of an enlarged Supreme War Council. This latter body still maintained a theoretically separate existence and resumed its discussions of the renewal of the Armistice during the early afternoon of Monday, 13th January, but, though the minutes of its meetings were listed separately, it became nothing more than an expansion of the Supreme Council through the presence of the military and naval experts, and the grouping of the meetings into sessions seems to have been almost entirely arbitrary. An attempt to revive it in its Armistice form was indeed made by the Reparations Commission, which decided on 19th February to submit a request for a ruling as to the inclusion of war costs 'au Conseil suprême de Guerre interallié tel qu'il était constitué le 4 novembre 1918';⁵ but this move was without result.

The exact relations between the Supreme Council of the Conference and the Supreme War Council were brought out during the meeting of 10th February, which was listed as one of the Supreme War Council, the military being in attendance. Towards the end of the proceedings, when a report from the Permanent Military Representatives at Versailles, with regard to the military forces required for the occupation of territories of the former Ottoman Empire, came up for consideration, Lord Milner, for Great Britain, objected to any discussion of the subject at the moment, on the ground that the report raised political issues that were not matters for the Supreme War Council. M. Clemenceau, in reply, pointed out that the remedy was a simple one, suggesting that 'the representatives of the Great Powers need only convert themselves into a Peace Conference'.⁶

During the first two and a half months at Paris the Supreme Council met as the Council of Ten, which shape it assumed when two Japanese delegates, M. Matsui and Viscount Chinda, took their places on it at the end of the Supreme War Council meeting on the Monday afternoon, 13th January. During the Armistice discussions in the previous autumn Japan had been grouped with

Belgium and Serbia, but the London Conference of December had placed her with the four leading Allies, and, consequently, at the close of the Sunday afternoon meeting of the Supreme Council it was agreed that two Japanese delegates should be invited to attend during future 'conversations'. The minutes do not record any discussion of this matter of Japan's admission, but there is evidence that it was rather grudgingly accepted. Mr. Lansing tells us that Japan's elevation 'caused criticism and dissatisfaction in certain quarters',⁷ and, in the course of the meeting of Sunday the 12th, M. Clemenceau referred critically to the fact that they had already agreed to admit Japan into their circle, although she had played an isolated and very limited part in the war. Certainly the inclusion among the 'Powers with General Interests' of a State interested only in her own claims in the Pacific and East Asia, securely buttressed as these were by secret agreements, was somewhat of an anomaly, and tended to make the Council of Ten unsuitable for its task.

The scheme produced by the Quai d'Orsay in November had envisaged preliminary meetings of the Premiers and Foreign Secretaries of the Great Powers at which agreement would be reached concerning the general structure and procedure of the projected Congress. Now, in January, it was necessary that they should meet to make final arrangements for the supposedly preliminary Conference of Allies that was in fact to replace the Congress. This was the main task of the Council of Ten during the first week of its existence, and it accepted as a basis for its deliberations a further French draft, entitled, 'Plan des premières conversations entre les ministres alliés' and dated 5th January.⁸ This was an adaptation of the November Plan and was produced by M. André Tardieu.

That, in spite of the decision taken at London in December, there was still uncertainty as to the general procedure to be followed was shown by President Wilson's question at the end of the first meeting as to what conference it was that they had been discussing.⁹ The crux of the matter was the handling of the relationship between the Great Powers and the rest of the Allies. This problem was, of course, by no means a new one, having been faced by the leading statesmen at Vienna a century before. In 1919, as in 1814, the chief victors in a great conflict had invited a large number of minor States to send plenipotentiaries to a European capital and, having thus brought them

together, were by no means sure of the manner in which they might safely be associated with the proceedings. Informal conferences in September 1814 between Metternich, Castlereagh, Nesselrode, Hardenberg and Humboldt led to an agreement that the effective control should be retained in the hands of 'Powers of the first order', to use Castlereagh's own words, and it has been suggested that we may trace here the origin of the idea of Great Powers claiming leadership avowedly as such.¹⁰ The Tardieu Plan clothed it with different language by referring to 'Powers with General Interests' (i.e., the Great Powers), which were to be represented at all sessions and on all subordinate commissions and committees, and 'Powers with Particular Interests', which were to be summoned by the former group to attend sessions in which questions affecting them were discussed.

In 1814 Castlereagh set forth a scheme by which a meeting of all the plenipotentiaries present at Vienna might be held and induced to accept the establishment of a cabinet of the Great Powers. Circumstances prevented the carrying out of this plan, however, and the victors of the Napoleonic Wars never did succeed in obtaining formal sanction for their actual proceedings. Where Castlereagh had failed M. Clemenceau was determined to succeed, being probably influenced by the ease with which, in spite of his forebodings then, he had controlled the Inter-Allied Conference of 1917, and he now pressed for an immediate meeting of the Conference in plenary session so that the position of the Supreme Council might be regularized. He had in mind a definite programme, which he put forward in reply to President Wilson on 12th January. Informal conversations such as those in which they were then engaged would continue, but a formal Preliminary Peace Conference 'for which all the world was waiting'¹¹ must be brought into existence, to be followed later by a full Peace Congress. On Monday, 13th January, he opposed all suggestions that there should be a further delay before the initial meeting of the Conference while the Great Powers endeavoured to reach a prior agreement concerning certain points of the agenda, emphasizing the fact that the imminence of such a meeting had been 'trumpeted abroad'. Though he clearly desired to retain control in the hands of the Great Powers, he wanted a formal session to 'give the delegates a mandate to start work'. He and his colleagues were, he urged, as yet only a

'Supreme War Council', and, as such, had no power to discuss points of the agenda.¹²

President Wilson agreed with M. Clemenceau that the Great Powers must inevitably dominate the proceedings, but he did not wish the fact that they were 'running the Peace Conference' to be too obvious, desiring rather to convey 'a more comfortable impression'.¹³ He did not believe that M. Clemenceau's plan would indeed satisfy the minor States, and satisfaction was an essential part of the peace settlement. When the second section of the French draft, which dealt with the terms of participation in the Conference, was read by M. Pichon on 13th January, the President objected that he did not see how the formula could be made to work. He did not like to give the impression that the Great Powers were only consulting other States when in the opinion of those Great Powers the interests of the others were affected. In any formal Conference there must either be full participation or none at all, and, consequently, he once more declared his opposition to the holding of any formal Inter-Allied Conference, advocating continuing informality until the stage of the Congress was reached. Difficulties arose the moment formality came in.¹⁴

During the discussions of the Sunday and Monday other suggestions were put forward. Mr. Balfour favoured informal conversations among the delegates of the Great Powers, leading to conclusions which, labelled as informal and preliminary suggestions, would then be referred to the Lesser Allies for consideration and comment, after which there would be further informal discussion by the Great Powers. M. Clemenceau, however, feared that this might involve the submission of all proposals for comment by the delegates of the minor States so that, as he put it, no decision could be taken without prior consultation with Costa Rica, Honduras and Nicaragua. Mr. Lloyd George, as was his custom, pointed to the experience of the Supreme War Council, in connection with which the formula now proposed to govern participation in the Conference had been applied with success, countries such as Belgium, Serbia and Greece having been called into consultation when their interests were involved. He did not, however, argue against the holding of a formal inaugural meeting to which all Allied States would be invited, apparently not fully realizing the difference that such meetings would make. Eventually, on the Monday afternoon, the Council of Ten adopted

the participation formula and decided to hold a plenary session forthwith. M. Clemenceau wanted to fix this for the Thursday, 16th January, but, Signor Orlando having been obliged to go back to Rome to deal with a ministerial crisis and being unable to return by that date, it was decided to inaugurate the formal Conference on the afternoon of Saturday the 18th.¹⁵

President Wilson thus lost his fight for informality, but his contention made at the first meeting of the Supreme Council still held good, that any formal process adopted should not exclude an informal one.¹⁶ He also put forward on the Friday morning a suggestion that, in addition to the full conferences and 'Conversations', there might be an intermediate grade of meetings, classed as 'plenary' and attended not merely by the Premiers and Foreign Secretaries, but by the full delegations of all the Powers interested in the particular question, the Great Powers being of course always interested.¹⁷ This suggestion, which seems to have been based upon the idea developed by Mr. D. H. Miller in November,¹⁸ did not find favour, however, and was dropped.

Having decided in favour of a formal Conference, the Council of Ten had then to make the necessary final preparations for its effective functioning. Appended to the Tardieu Plan was a draft of Rules of Procedure, consisting of sixteen articles, which were almost identical with those included in the November Plan, and these now formed the basis of the discussions. A Procedural Drafting Committee, on which sat M. Berthelot (France), Sir Maurice Hankey (Great Britain), Mr. Frazier (the United States) and Count Aldrovandi (Italy), worked during this week in conjunction with the Council of Ten to revise the draft articles in accordance with its decisions. In addition to the above-named, M. Fromageot (France) and Mr. Hurst (Great Britain) were attached as counsel to the Committee, and Mr. D. H. Miller was also present at one meeting.¹⁹

The Committee met for the first time on Tuesday, 14th January, on which day there was no meeting of the Council of Ten, and revised the first and second articles in the light of provisional decisions made by the Council on the Sunday and Monday.²⁰ The draft as a whole came before the Council of Ten on the Wednesday and was examined and discussed at length, both in the morning and the afternoon, before being approved with some modifications.²¹ On the following day, Thursday, 16th January, the Drafting Committee made the required revisions and gave

to the articles what was almost their final shape.²² Further minor revisions were made necessary through the reversal by the Council of Ten on the Thursday and Friday of decisions previously made with regard to the representation of States at the Conference, and the Drafting Committee met on Friday the 17th and again, apparently, on the Saturday morning to make these final changes.²³

A great deal of time was taken up during this week with discussions concerning the States which were to be summoned by the Great Powers to participate in the formal Conference, and the number of plenipotentiaries to be allotted to them. Though these issues, as has been shown, had been treated in some detail in the various documents of the post-Armistice period, nothing beyond the admission of Japan to equality with the other Four Great Powers, which were to have five delegates, and the necessity for special arrangements in connection with the British Dominions, had actually been settled before the Paris meetings began.

The four European States which had participated in the Armistice discussions (Belgium, Serbia, Greece and Portugal) had an unchallengeable right to membership, and the Tardieu Plan, unlike that of November, definitely restored Roumania to her old position as an Allied State. Brazil and China, though only theoretical belligerents, were now by this new scheme classed with the above-named States as having 'special interests', and even Siam, which had been ignored in November, was included. The newly recognized belligerent States, Poland and Czechoslovakia, were classed with the Allies as in the November Plan. M. Tardieu followed M. Pichon in allotting three plenipotentiaries to each of these States, except Poland and Czechoslovakia, which were to have two.

Though, in view of the provision that each delegation must vote as a unit, the number of representatives in each might appear to be an unimportant matter, it was not so in reality, for it affected the internal politics of some of the States concerned as well as their prestige. Much time was taken up with examination and re-examination of this issue. At the very outset of the discussions in the Supreme Council, on the Sunday afternoon, Mr. Lloyd George objected to the proposal to give three representatives to so many minor States, because it would tend to create an unwieldy assembly, and it was agreed that the general number should be two, but each case was to be considered separately.²⁴ Thus an attempt was made to reduce Portugal and Siam to having only

one delegate each, but on the initiative of Britain and France respectively they were restored to a position of equality.²⁵ Through the pressure of President Wilson, who explained that he wished to counteract German propaganda there, Brazil was, on the Monday, rather surprisingly placed in a position of special privilege with three delegates, despite the depreciatory references of Mr. Lloyd George to the Brazilian contribution of 'two or three torpedo boats'.²⁶ Belgium, Serbia and Greece objected very strongly to this elevation of Brazil, and M. Pichon voiced their dissatisfaction on the Wednesday morning, but no change was then made. On the Friday afternoon, however, it was reported that further protests had been made by Belgium and Serbia, the former State having even threatened to refuse to participate altogether if placed in a position inferior to that of Brazil. M. Clemenceau and Mr. Lansing supported the case for revision, and, in spite of Mr. Lloyd George's natural impatience concerning the constant reopening of these questions and the reversal of decisions, it was agreed that these two European States should be given three representatives.²⁷ On the Friday morning British initiative, following upon Anglo-French discussion behind the scenes, was responsible for the inclusion of the Hedjaz, with two representatives, among the Allied States,²⁸ this being the only means by which the voice of Arab nationalism might be heard in Paris.

Montenegro had been classed with Belgium and Serbia in the November Plan, but the Government of Belgrade protested against any admission of a separate Montenegrin delegation on the ground that a National Assembly at Podgoritza had declared in favour of the merging of the country into Greater Serbia (Yugoslavia). The Tardieu Plan, accordingly, left the matter open, and when the Council of Ten considered the situation it had to take note of the fact that there were two Montenegrin delegations actually in Paris, one of which, coming from Podgoritza and headed by M. Radovic, declared in favour of union with Serbia, while the other, acting on behalf of the exiled King Nikita, demanded the admission of Montenegro as a separate sovereign State. The issue was bound up with the much greater one concerning the recognition of the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, and this vitally affected the Italians, who were therefore ready to support the Montenegrin separatists. The greater issue was left in abeyance for five months, and, consequently, the

related question was similarly left open. The Council of Ten decided in favour of Montenegrin membership of the Peace Conference and allotted one delegate, but deferred arrangements concerning the choice of this delegate until the political situation had been clarified.²⁹ No further decision was, in fact, ever arrived at, though General Jvozenovitch was allowed to read a statement on behalf of King Nikita before the Council on 5th March,³⁰ and thus, as Mr. Harold Nicolson puts it, Montenegro was represented at the Conference 'by an empty gilt chair and a white card on the blotting-pad'.³¹

While one undoubted European Ally thus lost its separate representation, the British Dominions and India established an important precedent by securing the right to participate as sovereign States. As shown in the previous chapter the Dominion Premiers were completely dissatisfied with the position accorded to them by the London decision and the schemes of the Quai d'Orsay to implement it, for it seemed that they were to be permitted to participate only as additional members of the British delegation. The Tardieu Plan appears to have interpreted the London decision rather differently, implying that it placed the Dominions on a level with the Lesser Allies in general. The matter came up for discussion by the Council of Ten right at the start of its deliberations, on the afternoon of 12th January, when Mr. Lloyd George definitely pressed for separate membership. President Wilson countered with the suggestion that a British Empire panel would meet the case and explained that he objected to the giving of additional votes to the British group, to be met with the obvious reply that there would indeed be no voting, and the President appears to have given way almost at once.³²

The general principle having been conceded, differences of opinion as to the number of delegates to be allocated remained, and Mr. Lloyd George secured the adjournment of the discussion in order that he might consult the Dominion representatives. The matter came before the British Empire Delegation at its first meeting in Paris, on the morning of Monday, 13th January,³³ when there were put forward demands for adequate representation and even for separate membership of the Indian Native States. Mr. Lloyd George reported to the Council of Ten that afternoon, and, on the proposal of President Wilson, it was agreed that Canada, Australia, South Africa and India should have two delegates each, and New Zealand one, Newfoundland alone of

the Dominions being denied separate representation.³⁴ The Dominions gained a double triumph since they were also, as had been agreed previously, to be allowed to participate as additional members of the British Empire Delegation. When the Procedural Drafting Committee amended the first and second articles of the Rules of Procedure after these decisions, the British Empire replaced Great Britain among the Great Powers, and the four Dominions and India were listed separately among the Lesser Allies.³⁵ These British Dominions were not, however, separately represented on any of the general commissions of the Conference and did not participate in the meetings of the Lesser Allies to choose their representatives on these bodies.

A special and entirely separate problem was presented in the case of the smaller States of Central and South America, with which Liberia was also classed. In this group there were, in addition to the African State, seven theoretical belligerents (Cuba, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama), which the French November Plan had suggested might be represented by the United States, and four States, Bolivia, Ecuador, Peru and Uruguay, which had merely broken off diplomatic relations with Germany, and which had been classed with the neutrals in November. The Tardieu Plan gave one delegate to each of the members of this group, but did not mention them separately by name, so that it was not quite clear which were to be accepted as Allies, and which, if any, were still to be classed as neutrals, to be summoned only at the discretion of the Great Powers. The name of Costa Rica was, indeed, speedily eliminated from the list, to meet the wishes of President Wilson, who declared that he would refuse to sit with any delegate from that State, since to do so would be tantamount to a recognition of a Government established to further the interests of one individual, and which had declared war only to secure such recognition.³⁶

The Council of Ten appeared to class the four South American States with the neutrals on the afternoon of 13th January,³⁷ and the Procedural Drafting Committee on the Tuesday definitely omitted them from the list of members in Article I,³⁸ this being approved by the Council on the Wednesday morning.³⁹ Yet it would appear that it was really the intention of the Council to group these non-belligerents with the Allies, for, on the Wednesday afternoon, the suggestion of M. Pichon that they should be

invited to attend the inaugural meeting of the Conference was accepted without question.⁴⁰ Nevertheless the complete draft of the Rules of Procedure issuing from the Drafting Committee on the Thursday⁴¹ still placed these four States with the neutrals, and it was not until the Friday morning that a change was made. President Wilson then raised the matter, declaring that he had only just realized that these States were being classed with States which could only be summoned at the discretion of the Great Powers, whereas he desired that they should attend as of right when matters concerning them were under discussion.⁴² As a result of his intervention these non-belligerent States were accepted as full members of the Conference and the necessary revisions were made by the Drafting Committee that afternoon.⁴³

The question of possible representation of Russian interests in Paris produced long discussions and little tangible result. At no time was there any suggestion that the Bolshevik Government should be permitted to send delegates to the Conference, and any representation of Russian interests must have been through the creation of a special Allied Committee for Russian Affairs, such as the Quai d'Orsay had suggested in its revised draft of 21st November. The Tardieu Plan merely stated that 'the conditions of an eventual representation of Russia' were 'of a peculiar kind', and left the matter there. When the question came up for discussion by the Council of Ten, on the afternoon of Sunday, 12th January, it was at once decided that there should be no Russian representation at the Conference itself,⁴⁴ and later in the week Mr. Lloyd George put forward his plan for a separate conference of all the Russian parties.⁴⁵ To hold this in Paris, as was first suggested, seemed to M. Clemenceau and others to approach dangerously near to the reception of a Soviet delegation by the Peace Conference, and, accordingly, the place of meeting was changed to Prinkipo. From the moment of this decision the Russian issue was just one of the biggest of the many executive problems facing the Allies and ceased to concern the organization of the Conference.

Invitations to the various States to send delegates to Paris had, as mentioned in the previous chapter, been sent out from the Quai d'Orsay in December. Thirty-two States, apart from Montenegro, having now been officially granted rights of membership, the question of the issue of invitations to attend actual sessions of the Conference was raised on Monday, 13th January,

by Mr. Balfour, who presumed that France would be responsible.⁴⁶ It was agreed, however, that invitation should be on behalf of the Great Powers as a body, and at the same meeting it was accepted that all the Member-States should be invited to attend the opening session. Invitations were actually sent by M. Pichon on behalf of the Powers with General Interests, and on the Wednesday afternoon he explained that, as he was unaware of the exact identity of the various plenipotentiaries, he would communicate through the various Ambassadors or Ministers in Paris, using the British Embassy in connection with the Dominions and India.⁴⁷

When the arrangements for the inaugural session were being discussed, President Wilson asked if it was to be a public one, and M. Pichon replied in the negative, this view being accepted by the Council.⁴⁸ Against this decision the representatives of the world's press in Paris vigorously protested, and the President raised the matter again on the Thursday morning. After some discussion it was decided to summon a meeting of pressmen for five o'clock of that afternoon, when Professor Mantoux would attend to explain the difficulties of the situation.⁴⁹ The newspaper-men remained dissatisfied, and the meeting appointed a committee which drafted a request for publicity.⁵⁰ M. Mantoux reported to the Council of Ten on the Friday morning, and it was decided, after further examination of the question, to reverse the previous decision and allow the press to have access to the opening meeting of the Conference proper, without prejudice to the future, thus establishing in effect a precedent that was consistently followed, except when the draft German and Austrian Treaties were presented to the delegates of all the Allies in May.

Though the question of publicity had thus been satisfactorily settled the Council failed to reach agreement concerning the official language of the Conference. All the schemes of the Quai d'Orsay had inevitably provided for the following of long-established precedent by the adoption of French, but there was a determined Anglo-American effort to place English on the same level. As early as 24th November there had been moves in favour of English, the initiative apparently being taken by the Americans, while the British were still doubtful as to the possibilities of modifying the old diplomatic tradition.⁵¹ Now there were lengthy discussions by the Council of Ten, Mr. Lloyd George claiming official status for English as the language of two Great

Powers out of five, and also of the Dominions, and President Wilson urging that they were not bound by European tradition, and that English had become the diplomatic language of the Pacific.⁵² The issue was further complicated by the intervention of Baron Sonnino with a plea for his own language, and, in view of the definite conflict of opinion, the matter was shelved. Thus the first plenary session of the Conference had to meet with this question unsettled.

It was not, in fact, formally settled until the treaties themselves were being completed and, though meanwhile the proceedings of the Conference itself and of its various subordinate bodies were conducted in both French and English, this practical recognition of equality in pre-eminence was always open to challenge. The Italians continued to insist that if English was to be recognized as a language of diplomacy then their own tongue must also receive recognition. When the report of the International Labour Commission was drawn up at the beginning of April for submission to the Plenary Conference, French and English texts only were at first given, but the Italians vigorously protested against such implicit recognition, and an Italian text was subsequently added.⁵³

Arrangements for the opening meeting of the Plenary Conference had been completed by the afternoon of Friday, the 17th, and every provision had been made for securing control by the Great Powers that had summoned it. The Conference was to be bound by Rules of Procedure which were not to be submitted to it for endorsement as had been suggested in November.⁵⁴ When Mr. Balfour had raised this matter, M. Pichon had pointed out that any such submission would result in a long debate, especially concerning the numbers of delegates allotted, and that, though it was known that the Great Powers were drafting regulations for the control of the proceedings, no protest had been received.⁵⁵ In accordance with these regulations, after an opening speech by the President of the French Republic, M. Clemenceau was to take charge of the proceedings, and his subsequent formal election as President of the Conference was inevitably to follow. In his hands would be the appointment of a Secretary-General and his assistants, who would together form the General Secretariat of the Conference, and it had been agreed by the Council of Ten that one secretary should in effect be chosen by each of the Great Powers.⁵⁶ Four Vice-Presidents were to be elected,

the obvious intention being that the four Powers other than France should each appoint one.

The two organs of the Conference, which, according to the Rules of Procedure, were to be established by the inaugural session, the Credentials Committee and the Central Drafting Committee, were to be composed of nominees of the Great Powers only. Mr. D. H. Miller had urged that the process of the verification of full powers was of such importance that the Lesser Allies ought to be represented on the body responsible for it,⁵⁷ but the Council of Ten did not take this view. The very important work of drafting the treaties in which the conclusions of the Conference would be embodied was, according to the various schemes of the Quai d'Orsay, to be entrusted to a Committee chosen on a language basis, but the Council of Ten rejected this, and control by the Great Powers was more firmly secured by the reservation of the actual textual preparation for their experts alone.

The first plenary session of the Conference was duly held on the afternoon of Saturday, 18th January, and the proceedings were conducted by M. Clemenceau without a hitch of any kind. 'The Conference opened officially by Poincaré,' wrote Mr. Harold Nicolson in his diary for that day, 'Clemenceau rather high-handed with the smaller Powers. "Y a-t-il d'objections? Non? . . . Adopté." Like a machine-gun.'⁵⁸ All the elections proceeded according to plan, the verification of powers was afterwards carried through without any of the disputes and consequent wastage of time so often associated with the process in the past, and the Five Great Powers of Paris had secured that recognition of their leading position which had eluded the Great Powers of Vienna a century before.⁵⁹

The initial success did not, of course, mean that the controlling position of the Five Great Powers was to meet with no challenge, there being attempts by Belgium and Serbia in particular to force an entrance to the inner group. Belgium led the way, at the beginning of March, by claiming the right to be represented at meetings of the Ten when the supposed preliminaries of peace with Germany were under discussion. Reference to the receipt of this Belgian request was made by M. Clemenceau at the meeting of the Ten on 5th March and a discussion of some interest followed.⁶⁰ Mr. Balfour wisely pointed out that, while refusal would be difficult, to admit the Belgians would create a precedent. The Poles, for example, would desire similar

treatment. When Colonel House made the point that the Belgians had fought throughout the war Mr. Balfour showed that this distinction could not be maintained, for Serbia had also fought throughout. Moreover, Poland had been given an equal footing as a member of the Plenary Conference. M. Clemenceau recalled to the attention of the Council the formula which had been drawn up to govern the relationship between Powers with 'General' and Powers with 'Particular' Interests and it was decided 'that the right of the Belgian Government to be represented on the Supreme Council of the Allied and Associated Powers during the discussion of the preliminary peace terms should be limited to the occasions coming within the regulations for the Peace Conference: viz., when terms in which Belgium was specially interested were under discussion'.⁶¹

A few days later a challenge came from the Serbs, who, claiming to represent the new Serb-Croat-Slovene State, demanded the right to be present at meetings of the Supreme Council devoted to the examination of the boundary between that State and Italy and to participate in the discussions. This claim was put forward in a letter from M. Pachitch to the President of the Conference, who raised the issue at the meeting of the Ten on 11th March.⁶² The right of the Serbs to attend and to present a statement was conceded at once, but their participation in the discourses of the Council was resolutely opposed by Baron Sonnino. Mr. Lloyd George referred to the answer given to Belgium on 5th March and contended that this could hardly be interpreted as meaning that the representatives of the Small Powers must retire before a decision had been taken on issues vitally affecting their interests. To this interpretation of the participation formula Baron Sonnino made no direct reply, but argued that, since the Croats and Slovenes had not been recognized as Allies, the Conference rule did not apply. There perforce the matter was left, being, like so many procedural issues, bound up with big political questions.

More general issues affecting the relationship between the Great and Small Powers would inevitably arise as the work of the Conference was being shared out and a general structure shaped to deal with it. These will be examined in the following chapter.

CHAPTER VI

AGENDA AND GENERAL STRUCTURE

IN the days immediately following the Armistice, all those responsible for planning the process of peace-making appear to have assumed that a Conference of the Great Powers alone would precede the gathering of any more general assembly, and prepare the way for the latter by the arrangement of a preliminary treaty. In the event, however, things worked out very differently at Paris, the Supreme Council summoning a Conference of 'States with Particular Interests' to exist parallel with itself, before any portion of the settlement had been arranged. 'Certain regulations have been formulated and passed,' stated Sir Robert Borden at the plenary session of 25th January, 'by which, as I understand, two Conferences were established—one a Conference of the Five Great Powers, and another which may be called the full or Plenary Conference.' 'I make no mystery of it,' said M. Clemenceau, in reply, 'there is a Conference of the Great Powers going on in the next room.'¹ This latter body, which, as Clemenceau reminded the Lesser Allies on the same occasion, had 'decided that there should be a Conference at Paris and that the representatives of the countries interested should be summoned to attend it', had on 18th January secured acceptance of its position as the Bureau of the Conference. Henceforth, the names of the statesmen taking part in the 'conversations in M. Pichon's Room' were arranged at the head of the British Minutes in the French alphabetical order of their respective countries, as provided in the Conference 'Règlement', and the Americans used the letters 'B.C.' to label their records of these same meetings. The exact relations between the two bodies, Supreme Council and Inter-Allied Conference, remained yet to be decided, however.

These relations would, in fact, be decided in the process of arranging the division of work between the 'two Conferences' and establishing the necessary organization to deal with it, a process almost entirely left over until the second week in Paris because M. Clemenceau had wanted an early plenary session. Elaborate plans had been produced by the Quai d'Orsay for the purpose of guiding those who would be responsible for arranging the

agenda of the Conference, but the general structure was indeed built up empirically and the French plans were set aside. M. Tardieu, who was himself the chief architect of these schemes, blames for their rejection 'the instinctive repugnance of the Anglo-Saxons to the systematized constructions of the Latin mind',² but there was in fact nothing particularly logical or systematic about the French plans for organization. Their influence upon the programme and general structure of the Conference was slight.

The November drafts envisaged a Congress that was to pass through two distinct stages, the arranging of the details of the war settlement to precede the determination of the future international order, but this programme was rendered useless by the failure of the Great Powers to decide upon the fundamentals of the war settlement before bringing the Conference into being. Not one of the French schemes, not even that produced in January when the substitution of a Conference of Allies for an early Congress had already been decided upon in London, made any reference to the really vital problem, which was the division of work between two contemporary assemblies. That the Council of Ten, while taking the Tardieu Plan as a basis for discussion of problems connected with representation and procedure, should have almost completely ignored the sections dealing with agenda and organization, is not in the circumstances in any way surprising.

Any chronological division between consideration of issues directly arising from the war and those affecting solely the future international order was clearly impossible in January, for with parallel Conferences must come parallel discussions. Professor Binkley refers to this process as the 'telescoping' of the agenda and attributes it almost entirely to the influence of President Wilson, who put the League in the forefront.³ Actually the 'telescoping' was an inevitable result of the holding of a Plenary Conference side by side with a Conference of Great Powers, since, having brought the general Conference into being, the Great Powers had to give it something to do, and it was certain that this something would not include the treatment of matters affecting the vital interests of those Powers. Obviously the Plenary Conference must discuss, primarily, problems of more general concern. Yet in the scheme placed before the Council of Ten on Sunday, 12th January, there was no hint of this.

The draft did indeed abandon the rigid division of the agenda

into two separate divisions, and, elaborating an idea introduced into the third and official version of the November Plan, provided that the Conference should begin its 'task of preparing, through a settlement of the war, the new organization of international relations' by the enunciation of eleven leading principles which would govern the settlement as a whole. These leading principles were concerned with such items as the establishment of a League of Nations, the drafting of an international economic statute, the establishment of an arbitral tribunal, the 'Freedom of the Seas', the publication of treaties, etc. Presumably the Conference as a whole would participate in establishing some general agreement on these points. The French scheme then outlined the agenda, beginning with territorial problems, but made no attempt at a division of labour. It provided for the establishment of eighteen 'commissions of plenipotentiaries and committees of technical delegates' to deal with eighteen varied topics, some territorial and some affecting the future world order, but said nothing about the way in which these were to be set up and how controlled. The November Plan had provided for seven 'commissions of plenipotentiaries' to deal with territorial issues, and the same number of 'committees of technical delegates' to deal with other issues; we may therefore assume that the commissions of the January scheme were also to deal with the territorial problems.

The problem of planning the labours of the Conference was first considered by the Council of Ten at its meeting on the afternoon of Monday, 13th January,⁴ when M. Pichon proposed that they should begin consideration of the second portion of the Tardieu Plan, which concerned the items of the agenda and the order of their discussion, but the programme of the Quai d'Orsay was promptly brushed aside. President Wilson, perhaps rather pointedly, suggested that 'as a practical consideration' the Great Powers should themselves begin by an examination of five important topics (League, Reparations, New States, Frontiers, Colonies) with a view to arrival at an understanding before entering into the Plenary Conference.⁵ It would not appear that the President wished this examination to be conducted by the Council of Ten, for he used the phrase 'National Peace Delegates', and he seems to have had in mind an inner body, possibly of leading delegates only. There was general acceptance of the idea of reserving items similar to those mentioned by President Wilson for examination by the Great Powers, but, as shown in the last

chapter, M. Clemenceau's influence secured that such investigation should follow and not precede the inaugural meeting of the Conference. It was at this same meeting that Wilson, very characteristically, and perhaps very wisely, declared his firm opposition to the definite fixing in advance of any order of discussion, which, he maintained, ought to be settled from time to time. A list of subjects to be discussed could be prepared, but not the order of their discussion.

During the above conversations Baron Sonnino expressed his own doubts as to whether a Conference of over twenty States would be prepared to allow the Great Powers to reserve for their own meetings the preliminary examination of all the more important topics. While this point remained to be decided, it was quite certain that some work must be provided for the Plenary Conference that was to meet so soon, even though the general division of work was to be postponed until afterwards, and this matter was not fully considered until the meetings of the Council of Ten on the Friday, 17th January. There were then some brief references by M. Clemenceau to this subject at the close of the morning meeting, and almost the whole of the afternoon was devoted to it.⁶

At the outset there was general agreement among the members of the Council of Ten that it was important to give the Conference something to do and, as President Wilson pointed out, this should be something definitely connected with the process of peace-making and not merely the appearance of work. The Great Powers were, however, determined to decide exactly what this work should be and to keep control of the agenda strictly in their own hands. Thus a proposal from Wilson that the Chairman of the Conference should, as issues arose, have the power of appointing committees of the Plenary Conference to examine and report, did not find favour, even though these committees would be required to report in the first place to the Great Powers, Mr. Lloyd George expressing a general fear of the creation of machinery which the Supreme Council might not be able to control.

This suggestion by the President may have been based on an opinion of his legal advisers, first expressed by Mr. D. H. Miller in his memorandum of comment upon the revised French draft of 21st November.⁷ This had pointed out that, apart from the Credentials and Drafting Committees, there was no provision in

the Rules of Procedure for the appointment of subordinate bodies by the projected Congress itself, except a general regulation concerning the use of technical experts, and had gone on to suggest that one of the rules should specifically provide that committees might be appointed from the plenipotentiaries present, representing at least three Powers, to consider such questions as the Congress might determine. Had this plan been adopted, the resulting organization of the Conference might have been very different, but even with safeguards it was not likely to commend itself to the Great Powers, who were facing the problem of controlling a parallel and potentially rival assembly. The Plenary Conference was not to have any initiative in developing organization.

The British Premier suggested, as an alternative procedure which he had already outlined during the discussions of the 13th,⁸ that there should be a general invitation to the various delegations to submit their views on questions in which they were interested (such as territorial claims, etc.), and this plan was adopted. In accordance with a suggestion, previously made by President Wilson, to avoid the impression that the Great Powers were acting independently,⁹ it was further agreed that the proposals of the Lesser Allies should go to the General Secretariat and not directly to the Supreme Council. After the Secretariat had received all such reports and made a digest of them, there would follow consideration by the Great Powers, a further proposal by Wilson, that the Chairman should have power to decide whether the reports should come before the Supreme Council or be referred at once to the Plenary Conference, being rejected.

It was decided that the Conference must be kept strictly to the agenda prescribed. Any additions could be made only by the authority of the Great Powers, M. Clemenceau refusing to accept responsibility as Chairman. Thus if any delegate raised an issue not on the order paper the Chairman would refer the question of its admission to the Great Powers before any discussion was allowed in plenary session, Mr. Lloyd George's contention that in any case due notice of any new proposal should be given, being, as M. Pichon pointed out, met by the provision to that effect in the Rules of Procedure.

Having thus ensured their complete control of procedure, the Great Powers had still to consider whether any topics should actually be placed on the agenda for the inaugural session.

M. Clemenceau did not wish this gathering to be purely formal, and suggested, therefore, on the Friday morning, that certain matters should be laid down as being suitable for study by the representatives of the Lesser Allies. The public would then, as he rather cynically observed, infer that the Conference meant to work and would also not expect another session soon.¹⁰ At the Friday afternoon meeting of the Council of Ten M. Pichon suggested that the five subjects put forward by President Wilson on the Monday should be placed before the Plenary Conference, but the President at once pointed out the obvious fact that these were topics which, according to his idea, were to be reserved for preliminary examination by the Great Powers. Mr. Balfour contended that of the five items only two, the League and Reparations, were suitable for reference to the Plenary Session, and, while President Wilson wished to withhold the League, M. Clemenceau wished to defer any discussion of Reparations.¹¹

It was Mr. Lloyd George who brought forward the two subjects that were actually placed before the inaugural session as suitable for the special consideration of the Lesser Allies; War Guilt (responsibility of the authors of the war and penalties for crimes committed during the war), and International Labour Legislation. The first of these two topics had been very definitely thrust into the foreground by the pressure of public opinion, especially in Britain during the election campaign. As has been stated in a previous chapter, this was one of the issues discussed at the London Conference, and we now know from Mr. Lloyd George's account how much of the time of the Imperial War Cabinet at post-Armistice meetings was taken up with its consideration.¹² The influence of Mr. George Barnes and the necessity of making a definite appeal to organized Labour would account for the prominent position given to the second topic. On 15th January the War Cabinet in London had accepted a joint memorandum from the Home Office and the Ministry of Labour, urging that the Peace Conference should establish a body to consider labour problems, and a summary of the discussion had been telegraphed by Lord Curzon to Mr. Balfour in Paris. That same night Mr. Barnes had crossed over to France to give his personal attention to the implementing of this British policy.¹³

Having thus dealt with the inaugural session without the adoption of any general plan, the Council of Ten had, during

the second week of its existence, to tackle in earnest the twin problems of the division of the work of peace-making and the development of a suitable organization for dealing with it. Much of the time of the Council between the first and second plenary sessions of the Conference was, indeed, taken up with discussions of these issues. Certain topics were definitely selected as suitable for treatment by the Conference as a whole, and it was decided that these should be examined by commissions on which the minor States were to be represented.

In addition to the two subjects already formally placed on the agenda of the Plenary Conference (War Guilt and International Labour Legislation), three further items were now selected for treatment in this manner: the League; Reparations; and Ports, Waterways and Railways. It would appear that the various French schemes did have some slight influence concerning the selection of these subjects, for there is a certain correspondence between the non-territorial subjects listed in these plans as suitable for treatment by subordinate bodies and the five now to be referred to the commissions of the Conference, though the Quai d'Orsay had actually contemplated the examination of these questions by preparatory committees of experts.

The choice of these particular items for reference to bodies on which the Lesser Allies were to be represented was, however, more obviously governed by the necessities of giving the Plenary Conference something to do and of satisfying public opinion. It will be at once apparent that, of the five subjects, two (the League and International Labour) were connected with the future international order, and were therefore very suitable for reference to the Conference as a whole, and two (Reparations and War Guilt), it may be suggested, were given prominence in order to satisfy public opinion. The fifth subject (Ports, Waterways and Railways) may have owed its selection to its partial inclusion in the French schemes. In so far as the fifth commission concerned itself, as it did at first, with the preparation of a General Transport Convention, it might be classed with those bodies dealing with the League and International Labour.

The general question of the composition and methods of choosing the members of the commissions was briefly touched upon at the meeting of the Council of Ten on the afternoon of Tuesday, 21st January,¹⁴ and was then exhaustively discussed at meetings on the Wednesday afternoon and Thursday morning.¹⁵

There was in each case to be a nucleus of representatives of the Great Powers, two from each in the case of all except the Reparations Commission, on which each would have three. The controversial question concerned the method of choosing the representatives of the minor States and the number to be allotted, and this was threshed out in connection with the League Commission.

President Wilson, expressing what was in effect general opposition to the whole plan as conceived by the others, wanted the League issue to be placed first in the hands of a small committee composed of delegates from the Great Powers alone and having the right to call in representatives of the Lesser Allies for consultation as required, reference to a wider body to follow later. In opposition to the President were M. Clemenceau and Mr. Lloyd George, who stressed the importance of enlisting from the start the co-operation of the Conference as a whole. The British Premier pointed out that already the minor States were complaining of their exclusion from real work: they had been summoned to send to Paris delegates who were now found to have nothing to do, whereas 'they ought to be brought into the making of the peace'.¹⁶ M. Clemenceau was most anxious that the smaller States should be given something to do; 'this should be done to please the public'. He was confident that 'on these committees [*sic*] the Small Powers would merely follow the lead of the Great Powers', but 'it was necessary to give them the idea that they were being consulted'.¹⁷

The principle of direct representation of the Lesser Allies having been reaffirmed in spite of President Wilson, Mr. Lloyd George suggested that the Great Powers should themselves nominate the delegates who were to represent the minor States. He afterwards modified this proposal so that it would have left the choice to the delegates of the Great Powers forming the nucleus of the League Commission, these being given the power to co-opt. It was M. Clemenceau who wanted the small States to have the right to choose their own representatives, and this policy prevailed, it being decided to invite the Lesser Allies to meet separately and choose five delegates to represent them.¹⁸ This general plan was afterwards applied to the commissions that were to deal with International Labour Legislation, War Guilt, and Ports, Waterways and Railways,¹⁹ but in the case of the Reparations Commission a different procedure was adopted.

Here the Council itself chose the States which were to be represented by two members each (Belgium, Serbia, Greece, Roumania and Poland).²⁰

The Great Powers, having decided upon this scheme and fixed the terms of reference for the commissions, summoned a second plenary session of the Conference and placed the plan before it for formal sanction. At this session of the 25th January²¹ there were the first open signs of opposition to the dictation of the Supreme Council, the lead being taken by M. Hymans (Belgium), who raised the whole question of the way in which the Great Powers were organizing the Conference and determining its procedure without adequate consultation with the Lesser Allies. M. Calogeras of Brazil followed with an expression of annoyance at hearing that 'this has been decided, etc.', and there was general criticism of the inadequate representation proposed for the Small Powers on the commissions. Sir Robert Borden, while agreeing that a limitation of membership was necessary, felt that the matter had not been placed before the assembly in the most appropriate way, and contended that it would have been better to leave the Conference itself to settle the number of delegates to represent the Small Powers as well as to choose them. He further objected that the 'Conference of the Five Great Powers had not been acting in accordance with the regulations adopted by the Plenary Conference of the previous Saturday', and added, 'I have no doubt it is with the best intention but, nevertheless, as we are acting under regulations adopted by representatives of the Five Great Powers it seems highly desirable that we should abide by them'.

Faced with this incipient revolt, M. Clemenceau struck out vigorously, emphasizing that the Great Powers had decided concerning the commissions as they had decided to summon the Conference itself. It was essential, he declared, to get the commissions into working order without delay, and the further plea of M. Hymans that the question of the number of representatives should be referred to the General Secretariat was brushed impatiently aside. 'If you ask for the postponement of the election,' warned the Chairman, 'it will be postponed, but I must tell you that the delegates of the Great Powers for their part will not consider themselves to have been postponed.' Before this threat the Lesser Allies gave way, approved the general scheme, and agreed to proceed to the election of their representatives, though formal

protests from Belgium and Portugal were noted by the Council of Ten on the following Monday.²²

A meeting of Powers with Special Interests for this purpose was called for the afternoon of Monday, 27th January, and the delegates of seventeen States duly met under the presidency of M. Jules Cambon, who had been appointed by the Council of Ten to take charge of the proceedings.²³ Five States: Guatemala, Honduras, Liberia, Nicaragua and Panama, do not appear to have been represented. At the outset various suggestions for an increase in the number of allotted places were put forward, but M. Cambon pointed out that they had no power to adopt any of these and could only forward them to the Bureau. He thought, indeed, that any changes might, even if accepted by the Bureau, have to be referred again to the Plenary Conference. There followed an adjournment for informal discussion, after which M. Hymans reported an agreement as to the States which were to fill the five places assigned on the commissions that were to deal with War Guilt and International Labour Legislation. The States to be represented on the War Guilt Commission were: Belgium, Serbia, Roumania, Poland and Greece; and on the International Labour Commission: Belgium, Cuba, Poland and Czechoslovakia. Serbia gained a place on the latter commission, but yielded it to Belgium, which thus had two representatives.

For the League and Ports, Waterways and Railways Commissions a vote was necessary, and it was agreed that M. Cambon should afterwards forward a request for additional representation. Voting was for States and not individuals, and, while at each election the five States receiving the largest number of votes at once secured the right to nominate delegates, the names of the four States next in order were sent up to the Bureau. Belgium, China, Greece, Uruguay and Serbia were elected to membership of the Ports Commission, and Belgium, China, Brazil, Portugal and Serbia were chosen for the League Commission. Roumania, Portugal, Poland and Czechoslovakia, in the former case, and Roumania, Poland, Greece and Czechoslovakia in the latter, were to be put forward as possible additional members.

The question of adding these States to the membership of these two commissions was not considered by the Council of Ten until the morning of 3rd February, when M. Clemenceau suggested the granting of the request in order to pacify the Small Powers. President Wilson, on the contrary, objected to any increase in

the size of the League Commission, pointing out that the proposed additions would tend to make it unwieldy and give the minor States a representation almost equal to that of the Great Powers. By way of compromise it was agreed that the matter should be referred to the two commissions themselves, which thus received from the Council of Ten, without any reference to the Plenary Conference, the right to co-opt four additional members in each case.²⁴

The Ports, Waterways and Railways Commission discussed the question that same afternoon and agreed to exercise this right,²⁵ the League Commission following this example of 5th February and afterwards admitting delegates from the four States concerned, 'conformément à la décision de la Commission et du Conseil suprême des Alliés'.²⁶ A rather peculiar request from Siam to be allowed to appoint an observing member was considered by the Ports Commission on 3rd February²⁷ and referred to the Council of Ten, which took no action in the matter. There were also two additions to the membership of the Reparations Commission, a request for the inclusion of Czechoslovakia being approved by the Council of Ten on 3rd February,²⁸ and another for the inclusion of Portugal on the 22nd.²⁹ On this latter occasion Mr. Lansing put in a claim on behalf of Brazil, but this was not proceeded with. The additions were accepted without question by the Commission on 4th and 24th February respectively.³⁰

It is worthy of note that not only did the Bureau, albeit at the request of the minor States, thus make changes in the composition of three commissions without any reference to a plenary session, but it also in the same way and at the request of France altered the terms of reference of the Reparations Commission on 27th January, only two days after these had supposedly been fixed by the formal sanction of the whole Conference.³¹

There were, of course, during these early days of the Paris proceedings, when the general organization of the Conference was being mapped out, other suggestions of subjects as suitable for reference to commissions. There was, for example, a very definite British move to have the general question of Disarmament referred in this way, the issue having assumed great importance for the British Government because of its election pledge to abolish conscription at home. Mr. Balfour called the attention of the Council of Ten to the urgency of the problem on Tuesday,

21st January,³² stating that the British delegates would shortly propose the appointment of a subordinate body to deal with it, and on the Thursday, when four of the five commissions already mentioned were established, Mr. Lloyd George brought forward a draft resolution for the setting-up of a similar body to consider Disarmament.³³ The Council was, however, desirous of keeping such an important matter more directly under its own control, and the British proposal was set aside in favour of a suggestion that the military experts should be summoned to state their views.

On the following Monday, 27th January, M. Clemenceau proposed the establishment of a commission to deal with various issues classed under the general heading of Private and Maritime Law, but Mr. Lloyd George voiced determined British opposition. Unlike Castlereagh, he had been obliged during the pre-Armistice negotiations to agree that the issue of the 'Freedom of the Seas' might be raised at the Peace Conference, but he was determined that it should not be raised effectively, and that any discussion there might have to be should be between the Great Powers only. All matters raising questions of principle were therefore effectively shelved by a vague reference to the future League of Nations, while such items of immediate importance as the disposal of enemy ships and the restoration of illegal prizes were to go to the Reparations Commission.³⁴

Three more commissions of the Conference were appointed at the beginning of March, to consider issues of Finance, Economics and Aviation, respectively, but the manner of their establishment was in several ways different from the procedure of January. Each of these later commissions was based upon a nucleus already in existence, the Financial and Economic Drafting Committees and the Inter-Allied Aviation Committee, on all of which the Great Powers alone were represented. The Council of Ten had been reluctant to refer financial and economic questions to any organs of the Conference without a thorough preliminary exploration of the ground to be covered, hence the setting-up of these Drafting Committees of one representative from each of the Great Powers to frame and set in order the questions requiring solution, the Financial Committee being authorized on 23rd January and the Economics Committee on the 27th.³⁵

The latter body reported to the Council of Ten on 21st February in favour of the establishment of an Economics Commission, and

was then requested to meet further to consider its composition, bearing in mind a special plea made by Lord Milner for preferential treatment for the British Dominions and India, and the necessity of giving representation to the Lesser Allies in general.³⁶ It reported further on 1st March when the report of the Financial Drafting Committee in favour of a Financial Commission was also before the Ten, and its verdict was against any separate consideration for the Dominions and India. The Council of Ten decided that the five members of the Committee should in each case form the nucleus of the Commission, that the Great Powers should each appoint an additional member, and that the Small Powers should have five representatives.³⁷

The Inter-Allied Aviation Committee, the war-time body mentioned in an earlier chapter, was composed of representatives of the British, French, American and Italian Governments only, and on 24th January M. Clemenceau circularized his colleagues, putting before them proposals for the adaptation of the existing Committee to enable it to deal with problems of the transition from war to peace.³⁸ The other three Governments concerned were asked to send representatives to a special meeting of the Committee to be held on 6th February, by which date, however, there had been no response, though the Italians afterwards signified their willingness to accept the French scheme. The British and American Governments, on the contrary, declared their opposition, and the British submitted counter-proposals for the establishment of a new body, an Aviation Commission, of which the existing Committee would form the nucleus. The Five Great Powers would each be represented by two members and the Lesser Allies as a whole would have five representatives. This Commission was to be the consultative organ of the Conference with regard to transitional aeronautical matters not strictly military, and was also to prepare a general Aerial Convention to operate when peace had been signed. The French Government signified its readiness to accept the British plan on 15th February, and, accordingly, a meeting of the old Committee was held on 6th March to give formal approval. This action was confirmed by the Council of Ten on 12th March.³⁹

In the case of neither of these later commissions was there any reference of the scheme to a plenary session for formal sanction, and the only question at issue was the method of choosing the five representatives of the Small Powers in each case. At the

meeting of the Council of Ten on Saturday, 1st March, it was agreed that the Secretary-General should invite the delegates of the minor States to meet on the Monday following to elect five members to serve on each of the two commissions (Finance and Economics) then sanctioned, and the meeting was duly held under the chairmanship of M. Jules Cambon, but the delegates present refused to proceed to an immediate election, demanding instead an increased representation.⁴⁰

M. Cambon reported on the matter to the Council of Ten on the afternoon of 5th March, pointing out that the demand was really a move on the part of the Latin American States directed against the supposedly privileged position of the minor European States such as Belgium.⁴¹ The Council refused to accede to the demand, and at a further meeting of the Small Powers, on Thursday 6th March, elections took place, which resulted, however, in the deliberate packing of the two commissions by the Latin-Americans, Portugal being the only European country to find a place. The representatives of six European States—Belgium, Serbia, Greece, Roumania, Czechoslovakia and Poland—refused to take part in the voting for the second commission.⁴²

Consequently the Council of Ten had to consider the resulting situation when Cambon reported on the 8th, and, after the rejection of a suggestion put forward by Colonel House for an enlargement of the commissions, combined with fractional voting powers for the additional member States, the views expressed by M. Pichon were accepted.⁴³ He contended that, while a big increase of membership would both impede the work and threaten the predominance of the Great Powers, certain States had a right to be represented because of their active participation in the war. It was thereupon agreed that the elections should be set aside and that the Great Powers should themselves choose the representatives of the Small Powers, M. Pichon being requested to submit a list.

He reported to the Council on the 10th, submitting the names of six minor States to be represented on the Finance Commission and seven to serve on the Economics Commission, and his lists were accepted.⁴⁴ The States chosen were: Belgium, Greece, Poland, Roumania, Czechoslovakia and Serbia for the Finance Commission, and Belgium, Brazil, China, Poland, Portugal, Roumania and Serbia for the Economics Commission. The decision of the

Council was conveyed to the Lesser Allies by a note from the Secretary-General, there being a feeling that it would be most unwise to summon a further meeting for the purpose.⁴⁵

The Aviation Committee, at its meeting on 6th March, had decided to ask the President of the Conference to call together the delegates of the Small Powers to choose representatives to serve upon the Aviation Commission; but on Saturday, 15th March, the Council of Ten, in order to avoid any repetition of the incidents connected with the elections to the Finance and Economics Commissions, decided itself to nominate the States which were to be represented, without any reference at all to the Lesser Allies, at the same time increasing the number of member States from five to seven.⁴⁶ The States chosen were: Belgium, Serbia, Greece, Portugal, Roumania, Brazil and Cuba. In this case, therefore, the Great Powers adopted right away the procedure suggested by Mr. Lloyd George in January.

Two months had thus gone by before the Great Powers had completed the work of building up the general structure of the Conference and distributing the agenda, eight items having been deemed suitable for reference to subordinate bodies on which the Lesser Allies were represented and which might to some extent be regarded as commissions of the Conference as a whole, though only five of these bodies had received the formal sanction of a plenary session. The general working of the Inter-Allied Conference which the Great Powers had called into being may be most conveniently traced through an examination of the working of the various commissions detailed above, and to this examination the following chapter will be devoted.

CHAPTER VII

GENERAL COMMISSIONS AND THE PLENARY CONFERENCE

THOSE making plans for the processes of peace-making, in the days when it was assumed that some kind of a preliminary settlement of issues arising directly from the war would precede the meeting of a full conference or congress, had suggested that the main task of such an assembly should be the formulation of plans for the future world order. The wisdom of this suggestion held good despite the fact that a full conference, albeit without enemy representatives, was meeting parallel with, instead of subsequent to, the conference of the Great Powers. The commissions whose establishment has just been described functioned effectively as true organs of the Inter-Allied Conference only in so far as they addressed themselves to the planning of the future rather than to the settlement of war problems. In so far as they failed thus to address themselves, either they became mere satellites of the Supreme Council, like the Economics, Finance and Aviation Commissions and the Ports, Waterways and Railways Commission in its later stages, or they failed completely to perform their allotted task, as did the Reparations Commission, or they produced clauses that were destined to become mere dead-letter sections of the treaties, as did the War Guilt Commission.

The British delegates made very definite efforts to turn the attention of the Inter-Allied Conference and its commissions towards the consideration of the future rather than the immediate present, some of the most important schemes that were put forward as blue-prints for a new era of international co-operation being substantially of British origin. In this category were the draft scheme for an International Labour Organization, the Keynes Plan, providing for continued economic co-operation, and drafts of general conventions dealing with Transport and Aviation. The chief obstacle in the path of those who wished thus to plan for the future was the transatlantic desire to return as rapidly as possible to a general condition of *laissez-faire*.

The three commissions established in the early days of March were never in any real sense organs of the full Conference, being

essentially bodies composed of representatives of the Great Powers, to whom some delegates from the other States had been added at the discretion of the Supreme Council. The work to be done had already been planned by the inner groups before the enlargement and they functioned as off-shoots of the Council, working in close collaboration with it upon the preparation of clauses for insertion in the treaties of peace and acting as general consultative bodies within their respective spheres. The Aviation Commission, which continued its meetings until after the completion of the German Treaty, did indeed, largely under British inspiration, devote some of its attention to the preparation of a General Aviation Convention, but this was never submitted to any plenary session of the Conference and its acceptance was held up by American reservations.¹ The Economics and Finance Commissions, in giving their energies so largely to the mere liquidation of the war situation, may be held to have missed a great opportunity, but to say this is only to say that the Great Powers were lacking in foresight, for they controlled the commissions. The scheme of Mr. J. M. Keynes,² already mentioned, would have averted this failure for, strongly maintaining that a complete and immediate return to a system of unrestricted private enterprise would be disastrous, its author proposed continued economic co-operation so that special facilities might be extended to countries whose financial credit had been temporarily destroyed. This scheme, having been first placed before the British Premier, was then forwarded to President Wilson with a covering letter of recommendation dated 28th April, but the American reply of 5th May³ was unfavourable, and thus the proposals were not brought before the Conference or any of its subordinate bodies.

The Ports, Waterways and Railways Commission set to work immediately upon the preparation of a General Transport Convention, taking as the basis for its discussions a scheme submitted by the British. The work was never completed, however, for, early in March, under the direction of the Supreme Council, the Commission turned aside to draft clauses for inclusion in the various treaties of peace. When these clauses had been drawn up, the British Delegation made an effort to secure the resumption of the task abandoned in March, but American opposition forbade.⁴

The commissions established to deal with the problems of

Reparations and War Guilt, then very much in the public mind, may indeed be more truly regarded as organs of the full Conference in that their relationship to the Supreme Council was by no means close. They cannot be held to have functioned effectively, however, and their history shows quite clearly the un-wisdom of entrusting such issues to bodies of this kind.

The Reparations Commission worked without any guidance from the Supreme Council and therefore in a sphere remote from reality. Its members cannot fairly be blamed for this since, on 19th February, they decided to ask the Great Powers for a ruling as to what categories of damage to civilians and their property might be deemed covered by the November formula. M. Klotz, as chairman of the Commission, made every effort to obtain a decision from the Supreme Council, but entirely without success.⁵ The labours of the Commission were therefore almost inevitably doomed to futility. The first sub-section, charged with the evaluation of the damage for which the enemy States might be held responsible, could make but little progress without the guidance that had not been forthcoming, and Lord Sumner was moved to suggest, with somewhat prophetic irony, that their task seemed likely to occupy them, not merely until the signing of the treaties of peace, but even until the next war!⁶ The third sub-section, concerned with guarantees for payment, holding that it could do nothing until the others had produced something definite, never really functioned at all. The one sub-section that might have done useful work in the circumstances was the second, entrusted with the investigation of methods of payment, but it wasted much of its time in barren discussions as to its competence: was it competent to consider demands for German deliveries of coal, and was the restoration of stolen property within its province? The epitaph of the Reparations Commission was spoken by the Secretary-General of another body: 'Nous sommes sûrs que la Commission des Réparations ne fait rien. Personne n'a présenté quoi que ce soit.'⁷

The work of the War Guilt Commission, completed and neatly rounded off as it was, must nevertheless be regarded as so much wasted effort. Its members worked without any lead from the Great Powers or any indication as to how the persons named in its indictment were to be apprehended for trial in accordance with its recommendations. At its second meeting, indeed, the Commission did make an effort to establish contact with reality,

adopting the following proposals by a large majority: (a) That at the next renewal of the Armistice the Germans should be required to hand over a first batch of 'war criminals' together with relevant documents; (b) that the commanders of the Allied Forces in occupied territory should be required to secure such wanted persons as might be living in areas under their control. Mr. Lansing, however, refused in his capacity as chairman to report these suggestions to the Supreme Council, which alone could act upon them, arguing obstructively that, as servants of the full Inter-Allied Conference, they must report to it alone.⁸ No report from this commission ever did in fact come before the full Conference in any but a purely formal manner, and by that time every real opportunity of securing the wanted Germans had gone by.

The commissions set up to deal with International Labour Legislation and to establish the proposed League of Nations formed a group apart in that they devoted themselves entirely to issues affecting the future world order. They, in direct contrast to the other commissions, may also be said to have functioned effectively as organs of the full Inter-Allied Conference, by which they were formally appointed and to which they afterwards reported. In their general characteristics and procedure there was, moreover, great similarity.

In personnel the League Commission was outstanding, having President Wilson as its chairman. By his decision to attend the meetings of this body in person the President marked it out as one of supreme importance and ensured that the other States represented upon it would send to it some of their most distinguished men. Thus the British sent General Smuts and Lord Robert Cecil, the French, M. Bourgeois and the Italians Signor Orlando. Other prominent members were Colonel House, M. Hymans, M. Venizelos and M. Vesnitch.

The International Labour Commission was, perhaps, not quite so happy in its chairman, for Mr. Samuel Gompers, placed in that position as an act of courtesy towards American Labour, was not really in favour of the objects which the more forceful members had in view, and was also considerably handicapped by the fact that the American Constitution had not been drafted with a view to facilitating the treatment of twentieth-century labour problems. The Americans, who, having concentrated upon the League, had not given as much attention to labour

questions as had the British and French, were not enthusiasts for the establishment of an International Labour Organization with positive functions, but, being suspicious of all governmental action in this sphere, desired rather the inclusion in the various treaties of some kind of Labour Charter as a negative safeguard against State interference. The position of Gompers was therefore a most difficult one, and Mr. Lloyd George comments, rather unkindly, that eventually 'he helped things along by his discovery that urgent business demanded his immediate return to the States'.⁹ It must be remembered, however, that, after much heart-searching, his last act as chairman was to recommend to the Commission the adoption of the British scheme.¹⁰

The Wilson of the Labour Commission was undoubtedly Mr. George Barnes, who dominated it throughout and took charge of affairs after the departure of Mr. Gompers. As he was the only representative of a Great Power on the Commission who was also a plenipotentiary, the British were quite naturally surprised that he was not chosen to preside.¹¹ He was ably assisted by Sir Malcolm Delevingne and the British Secretaries, Mr. Harold Butler and Mr. Edward Phelan. Other prominent members of this Commission were M. Vandervelde, M. Loucheur and M. Benes. M. Arthur Fontaine, of the French Ministry of Labour, was appointed to act as Secretary-General.

The League Commission was fortunate in having very precise terms of reference, for the resolution by which it was established, based upon a British draft of 15th January,¹² not only stated that the Commission was 'to work out the details of the constitution and functions of the League', but also laid down that the League 'should be open to every civilized nation' that could 'be relied on to promote its objects', that 'the members of the League should periodically meet in international conference' and that there should be 'a permanent organization and secretariat to carry on the business of the League in the intervals between the conferences'.¹³

The International Labour Commission did not receive such definite guidance, though the draft resolution placed before the Council of Ten by Mr. Lloyd George on 22nd January¹⁴ was twice amended before being finally adopted on the 23rd. In its final form it declared that the Commission was set up: (a) 'to inquire into the conditions of employment from the international aspect'; (b) 'to consider the international means necessary to

secure common action on matters affecting conditions of employment'; and (c) 'to recommend the form of a permanent agency to continue such inquiry in co-operation with and under the direction of the League of Nations'.¹⁵

Both League and Labour Commissions had, however, very definite bases upon which to start work. In the case of the former there was the Hurst-Miller Draft Covenant, which resulted from various Anglo-American conferences between 27th January and the first meeting of the Commission on 3rd February. French and Italian drafts were also laid before the Commission at this first meeting, and at the same time President Wilson produced his 'Third Paris Draft', but it was decided that the Hurst-Miller document should form the basis of the deliberations.¹⁶ The parallel basis for the discussions of the Labour Commission was a British draft scheme for the creation of an International Labour Organization. This had been elaborated after the arrival of the British Delegation in Paris at the beginning of January, in discussions between Messrs. Barnes, Butler and Phelan, and Sir Malcolm Delevingne, and had been put into legal form with the assistance of Mr. C. J. B. Hurst, Mr. Philip Noel-Baker and Sir Robert Garran, Solicitor-General of Australia. The scheme had been submitted first to delegates representing British Labour and then, on 31st January, to a full meeting of the British Empire Delegation.¹⁷ The only other delegation with any definite proposals was the French, and the British scheme, which had been worked out in far greater detail, was accepted by the Commission at its second meeting, on 4th February, as a suitable basis for its work.¹⁸

Having such definite plans before them neither of these two commissions found it necessary to begin by dividing the work among permanent sub-sections. No time was wasted in discussions about terms of reference and procedure, and the two bodies in plenary session got straight to work upon the drafts placed before them, the discussions taking the form of first and second readings in each case. The League Commission, by way of first reading, considered the Hurst-Miller Draft article by article, and then, as a second reading, there was a general review of the whole scheme. The Labour Commission, on the other hand, reversed this process, its early sessions being devoted to a desultory discussion of the general aspects of the British proposals, which it was afterwards decided should be regarded as a first reading. The

Commission then, by way of second reading, proceeded to examine the scheme article by article.

The general work of these two commissions falls naturally into two stages, the first of these in each case being rapidly completed in February. In this month the League Commission held ten meetings within the eleven days from Monday 3rd February to Thursday the 13th inclusive, assembling once daily, except on the 9th and 12th, when there were no meetings, and on the 13th, when there were two. These meetings were arranged for such hours as would not interfere with the other duties of President Wilson, who presided on every occasion but one, and the average length was three hours or so. 'The meetings were business-like to a degree,' wrote Mr. W. H. Shepardson (the American Secretary),¹⁹ and, as might have been expected of any body which Wilson controlled, informality characterized the proceedings. After the first few sittings, the practice of informal and simultaneous translation was adopted to avoid wastage of time.²⁰ The President was opposed to the keeping of formal minutes, so that secretaries were not chosen until the third meeting, and even then it was suggested that they should record decisions only, though this restriction was not maintained.²¹ Minutes of the February meetings were not circulated, however, until about 22nd March.

During February the Labour Commission met eighteen times, the meetings being distributed over the whole month, and progress was not quite as rapid as in the case of the League Commission. Secretaries, as well as other officers, were appointed at the first meeting, but it appears that most of the recording was done not by the official secretariat but by Mr. Phelan and M. Pone, lent by the British and French Delegations.²² Summaries of the proceedings were circulated after each sitting. There was some preliminary discussion as to language, M. Loucheur holding that only one official language was necessary and that French, and Mr. Barnes pointing out that the Conference had not yet arrived at an official decision on this point.²³ In actual practice English was recognized equally with French. Interpretation appears to have been effected with the usual formalities.

By 13th February the League Commission, with the assistance of two small drafting committees, had produced a draft covenant of twenty-seven articles.²⁴ By the 28th the Labour Commission had similarly approved the main features of the British scheme

for an I.L.O., Mr. Barnes tactfully marking the occasion by thanking his colleagues and especially the Americans, for their goodwill and courtesy.²⁵

After their production of these drafts the two commissions paused in their work. President Wilson's departure for the United States on 15th February inevitably meant a temporary suspension of the activities of the League Commission, and there was in fact little more that it could accomplish pending the President's renewal of personal contact with American critics of his schemes and the crystallization of public opinion in other States. The Labour Commission also felt the need for securing support from public opinion in the chief countries concerned, and, accordingly, on 28th February, there was a decision to adjourn for an interval of ten days so that the members of some delegations could return home for conference with their Governments and representatives of employers and labour.

The Labour Commission was the first to resume its regular meetings, on 11th March, the League Commission following suit on the 22nd. One task facing both bodies at this stage was the consideration of amendments necessary to satisfy the neutral world. The League Commission had made direct contact with neutral opinion through a small committee, presided over by Lord Robert Cecil, which met representatives of the neutral States on 20th and 21st March, the countries represented being: Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Denmark, Norway, Netherlands, Paraguay, Persia, Spain, Salvador, Sweden, Switzerland and Venezuela.²⁶ Amendments suggested by the neutrals were afterwards placed on the agenda for the Commission if sponsored by one of the members, but not otherwise. The Labour Commission did not make similar direct contact with representatives of neutrals though, on 28th February, the Secretary-General, M. Fontaine, had noted the receipt by the President of the Conference of a letter from the Swiss asking that they, with other neutrals, should be allowed to participate in drafting the scheme for the I.L.O.²⁷ This request was not granted and, instead, the Commission simply informed the neutrals of the plan which they had provisionally adopted on 28th February. The interval between that date and the resumption on 11th March was rather short, and yet the Commission had decided not to await neutral comments before adopting its report. As in the case of the League, draft amendments had to be sponsored by members.

The other and more delicate task facing both bodies at this stage was the reconciling of conflicting Anglo-American points of view. In the case of the League Covenant the American desire for the inclusion of a clause safeguarding the Monroe Doctrine was brought up against the British determination to block such an amendment unless an Anglo-American agreement on naval policy had been reached. This conflict was resolved by means of long informal conversations outside the Commission itself in which President Wilson, Lord Robert Cecil, Colonel House, and Mr. D. H. Miller took part.²⁸ In the case of the plan for the I.L.O. the chief Anglo-American divergence was concerning Articles 19 and 20 which had reference to the extent to which member States were to be bound by recommendations of the Organization. These difficulties were also dealt with informally and outside the Commission, Professor Shotwell, who had not been appointed as a member, being called in by Colonel House to work out a compromise. Not until agreement was in sight was there a formal appointment of a sub-commission to work out the formula.²⁹

These obstacles having been removed, the two commissions were able to proceed to the final adoption of their respective drafts and reports to the Conference. In this work the League Commission was greatly assisted by a new drafting, or, as President Wilson preferred to call it, a 'revision' committee. At first it was proposed that this body should confine itself to merely textual changes, but its functions were imperceptibly enlarged until it became in reality a body charged with the final revision of the Covenant in conjunction with the Plenary Commission. In actual practice much of the work for this body was prepared externally and informally in conferences between Messrs. Hurst and Miller.³⁰ The Labour Commission does not appear to have required the assistance of a drafting committee except in the special case of Articles 19 and 20 already mentioned.

This latter Commission, however, differed from that dealing with the League in that it had an additional and subsidiary task to perform, the preparation of a 'Labour Charter' for inclusion in the treaties of peace, and for this purpose it set up a sub-commission. Nineteen points suggested as suitable for inclusion in the treaties were brought forward by this body, and it was decided that only those securing the approval of two-thirds of the members should be adopted, nine being thus passed.³¹

The League Commission held only five meetings, after the February break, these being between 22nd March and 11th April, when its report received final approval. The Labour Commission, having the additional task of preparing the Labour Charter, and an agenda for the Washington Conference, and being compelled to mark time while Professor Shotwell strove to resolve the Anglo-American clash, met much more frequently at this stage, there being seventeen meetings from the resumption on 11th March to the adoption of the report on the 24th.

These two commissions were distinct in that they alone actually reported to the full Conference. Thus the only plenary sessions of the Conference held between 25th January, when they were formally established, and 6th May, when the completed German Treaty was presented, were held to receive their reports. There were actually three of these plenary sessions, held on 14th February, 11th April, and 28th April.

The right of the League Commission to report directly to the full Conference was successfully asserted by President Wilson before his departure for America, when, on the afternoon of 13th February, he informed the Council of Ten that the provisional draft of the Covenant would be ready that night and asked that a plenary session of the Conference should be summoned to receive it on the following day. M. Clemenceau was rather dubious about this suggested procedure and expressed the view that the report should first be submitted to the 'Conference of Great Powers'. The President in reply emphasized that the League Commission was an organ of the Plenary Conference rather than of the Supreme Council, and his view prevailed. M. Clemenceau was most anxious that the Conference should adjourn without discussion as soon as the report had been presented and explained, but President Wilson said that he did not see how members could be prevented from making speeches if they wanted to.³² The draft Covenant was duly presented to the Conference on 14th February and thus a precedent was clearly established.³³

With this in mind, Mr. George Barnes, a little more than a month later, requested the Supreme Council, then the Council of Four, to arrange for a plenary session to receive the report of the International Labour Commission. The question was referred to the Foreign Ministers for examination, and Mr. Barnes appeared before them on 1st April to urge 'that the report of the

Commission be heard by the body which had set up the Commission, namely the Peace Conference'.³⁴ The Foreign Ministers were by no means enthusiastic about the summoning of a plenary session for this purpose and, to use the words of Barnes, 'shunted the whole thing on to the Prime Ministers'.³⁵ It was at this juncture, on 2nd April, that Mr. Barnes wrote a letter to Mr. Lloyd George expressing his uneasiness concerning the attitude of the Foreign Ministers and stating 'that the Commission thought unanimously that the subject of the regulation of Labour was of such importance as to justify a meeting of the Plenary Conference so that the scheme of Labour organization could be launched in such a way as to mark it as one of the important matters of the Peace Conference'.³⁶ It was mainly owing to the advocacy of the British Premier that the Big Four, on 5th April, decided to meet the wishes of Barnes and his colleagues.³⁷

The fourth plenary session was accordingly held on 11th April³⁸ for the purpose of receiving the report of the Labour Commission, the delegates meeting not in the Clock Room of the Quai d'Orsay as on previous occasions, but in the banqueting hall, where there was better accommodation for journalists.³⁹ The resolution in favour of the adoption of the I.L.O. draft was moved by Mr. Barnes, and the scheme was approved, subject to reservations by certain States of Latin America arising from constitutional difficulties, and the adoption of an amendment moved by Sir Robert Borden to secure for the British Dominions, with reference to the I.L.O., a position not inferior to that accorded to them by the League Covenant.⁴⁰

The fifth plenary session of the Conference was held on 28th April,⁴¹ again in the banqueting hall, for the purpose of giving final approval to the revised draft of the League Covenant. At this meeting the clauses of the Labour Charter drafted by the Labour Commission for inclusion in the treaties also came up for discussion, having been left over when the main section of the Labour report had been dealt with at the previous meeting. At the last moment re-drafting had become necessary in order to ensure the approval of the Conference for these clauses and Mr. Barnes had found it almost impossible to secure the agreement of the Commission concerning the revisions required. At the meeting of the Conference, however, Sir Robert Borden moved an amendment which expressed the spirit of the recommendations of the Labour Commission in such a way as to secure general agreement.

It will be clearly seen that the rôle of the full Inter-Allied Conference was in actual practice a very restricted one. To such restriction there could be no effective and open challenge. President Wilson indeed did once, if we are to accept the record of Colonel House, threaten to bring some of the major issues affecting the settlement with Germany before the whole Conference. He is said to have told some of the American delegates on 6th April that, unless the French and British were prepared to concede something to the American point of view, 'he would insist upon having the conferences in the open; in other words to have plenary sessions with the delegates of all the smaller Powers sitting in'.⁴² Whether the President really had this plan seriously in mind is at least very doubtful, and in any case nothing came of it. The Great Powers entirely reserved for their own handling all matters affecting three most vital classes of problems before the Conference: colonial, territorial and military. Their manner of dealing with these will be considered in the following chapters.

CHAPTER VIII

THE COUNCIL OF TEN

FOR more than two months after the inauguration of the Conference in January, the meetings of the Great Powers, whose leadership had been formally accepted by the first plenary session, took the form of the Council of Ten, and the main task of this organ should, it would seem, have been the consideration of the fundamental issues which the Great Powers had reserved for their own handling. That it did not effectively get to grips with these issues is the chief criticism to be directed against the Council of Ten, and was the main reason for its later supersession by the Council of Four.

There were, if we include the nineteen occasions on which it met as the Supreme War Council, sixty-five meetings of the Council, from Sunday 12th January to Monday 24th March, and they were all held in M. Pichon's room, with the exception of some of the March gatherings, which were in the Clock Room. The general practice during the first fortnight or so was to have morning and afternoon meetings, but then, as the organization of the Conference developed, and some members, together with technical advisers, were required for other purposes in the mornings, afternoon meetings only became the rule.

The personnel remained fairly constant throughout, the basic figures being the 'Premiers and Foreign Secretaries' of the closing stages of the war, together with the American President, his Secretary of State and the Japanese. Japan was represented by M. Matsui and Viscount Chinda during the first week in Paris, but the latter dropped out when Baron Makino arrived on 20th January, Prince Saionji, who had been chosen to lead the Japanese delegation, not appearing until 15th March and being afterwards usually partnered by Makino. Each of the chief figures of the Council was absent for a term, the periods of absence being almost coincident and extending from mid-February to mid-March. M. Clemenceau's absence resulted from the attempt made upon his life, while the other leaders had to return to their respective capitals for reasons connected with domestic politics. During these absences the substitutes were usually

Colonel House, Lord Milner, M. André Tardieu and the Marquis Salvago-Raggi.

The members sat on the south side of the room, in high-backed arm-chairs behind small tables on which they placed their papers and maps, and they faced the double doors through which delegates of minor States would enter if summoned, and near which chairs had been placed for the accommodation of such visitors.¹ Various jottings of the time enable us to obtain a glimpse of the Council in session—the tired and contemptuous eyelids of Clemenceau, the black button boots of Woodrow Wilson, the rotund and jovial gestures of Mr. Lloyd George's hands, the infinite languor of Mr. Balfour slowly uncrossing his knees'.² M. Clemenceau sat near the fireplace at the western end of the room, with M. Mantoux to his right and M. Dutasta to his left. Secretaries, and expert advisers when they were present, sat behind their chiefs. A suggestion, made by M. Pichon, that the experts might at need be permitted to act as understudies, had been turned down by the Council,³ and their chiefs had to secure the permission of the Chairman before these advisers could make an explanation.

In the ante-room these technical experts were gathered together, awaiting calls that sometimes never came, occasionally accompanied by delegates of some 'Powers with Particular Interests' who had been summoned to attend and who sat 'on gilt chairs as if awaiting the dentist'.⁴ Through the waiting throng would pass M. Pichon to greet President Wilson and escort him to his seat, leaving the American's personal detective in the ante-room as a privilege denied to the other statesmen, whose guardians had to wait outside with the chauffeurs. 'Good afternoon—Good *affternoon*, gentlemen', was the President's usual salutation to those in the ante-room as they rose to greet him. Other leading figures would make less ceremonious entries, like that of the British Premier, who 'would roll gaily into that heated *salon* in the company of Sir Maurice Hankey'.⁵ The experts would continue to wait until, perhaps, they were actually called inside for consultation, but while inside they were always liable to be thrust outside again suddenly and without ceremony by M. Clemenceau, sometimes without having time to gather up maps and papers.⁶

Each delegation had its own special secretariat present at each meeting of the Council, and there was also the Joint Secretariat that was identical with that of the Conference as a whole.

M. Clemenceau had failed to take full advantage of the opportunity given to him by his right of appointing to the office of Chief Secretary, for he had nominated the amiable but unenterprising Dutasta, who, not having the requisite ability for steering through complicated problems and procedural difficulties, entirely failed to make the most of his position. One of the other secretaries and one alone, was able and ready to step into M. Dutasta's place, and that was Sir Maurice Hankey, who became the *Gentz* of Paris. He gradually and unobtrusively took charge, having the faculty of being able to put his hand on relevant documents, selected from a pile which he always carried, without loss of time, so that M. Clemenceau, coming to depend upon him as though he were actually Chief Secretary, would turn to him at intervals with the question, 'Where is that bag of yours?'

With Hankey in this leading position, the secretarial procedure established during the period of the war was maintained, as Mr. Lloyd George had desired.⁸ The minutes were not merely a record of decisions but a complete summary of the discussions, the abstracts being made by a very efficient staff of assistants largely drawn from Versailles,⁹ and each member of the Council received a mimeographed copy either the same evening or early the next day. Unless the member in question telephoned about the matter, the record was deemed accurate as far as he was concerned. In due course corrected and printed minutes were issued. There was a fairly large circulation of these minutes, so that the various sections of each delegation might follow all discussions affecting their interests, correct misconceptions and offer advice. In addition to recording the discussions and decisions in M. Pichon's room, the Secretariat acted as a clearing house for the distribution of documents and memoranda, was responsible for the summoning of technical delegates and had control of the agenda on the instruction of the Chairman.

While M. Clemenceau had failed to take full advantage of his right to appoint the Secretary-General, he appears to have failed also as Chairman to exercise effectively his right to control the agenda through the Secretariat, both he and M. Dutasta being far more successful in controlling the proceedings from day to day than in planning ahead. It has been well said that 'the tactics of the General Secretariat was admirable in the highest degree' but that 'it was the absence of secretarial strategy which failed to provide the Conference with an alternative to their rejected

programme'¹⁰ (i.e., the Tardieu Plan). A suggestion that it may have been just because the programme of the Quai d'Orsay had been brushed aside that M. Clemenceau allowed things to drift¹¹ seems far from satisfactory, especially as it was not the Premier but M. Pichon who had urged the adoption of the Tardieu programme of work before the Council of Ten.¹² A much more probable explanation of the policy of dealing with problems as they arose is that it was due to the persistence of the war-time habit of waiting upon events.¹³

Certain it is that the Supreme Council of the Paris Peace Conference worked merely from day to day during the first two months, had no definite programme and entirely failed to tackle most of the major problems which it had reserved for its own control. Its initiative seemed temporarily exhausted when it had brought into being the Plenary Conference, given to it a limited share in the making of the settlement and regularized its own position, and there was thereafter no immediate drive towards the solution of the more vital issues affecting the preliminary treaty which was supposed to be the goal of the Conference. Professor Binkley has indeed contended that all the significant items of the agenda were being dealt with by the end of January, and that about half the Treaty of Versailles was written by the commissions appointed between the 21st and the 27th,¹⁴ but the omissions included all territorial and military questions—exactly the problems with which any preliminary treaty would have to deal.

Complaints concerning the desultory nature of the procedure are to be found recorded in the minutes of the Council on several occasions. Thus, on the morning of 30th January, President Wilson urged that discussions at the meetings should be confined to definite propositions,¹⁵ and, in the afternoon of that same day, Mr. Lloyd George complained of the raising of a subject for which he had not come prepared and demanded the preparation of a definite agenda which should be adhered to.¹⁶ Yet the Council as a whole was not ready to concern itself with the general planning of its labours in advance, leaving it, as a rule, to the Chairman and Secretary to decide upon the subjects to be discussed at the next meeting. Only during the absence of M. Clemenceau in February, when M. Pichon was in the chair, did the council develop the temporary practice of deciding upon the agenda for each forthcoming meeting at the close of the previous one.

The brushing aside of the French scheme and the production by President Wilson of his own list of five subjects which he intended to be referred for preliminary examination by the leading delegates of the Great Powers, have already been described, and we have seen that the President's colleagues tended to think of these topics as a programme for the Conference as a whole, two of them being referred to commissions. There appears to have been no further attempt to adopt this programme or any other definite scheme for the Council of Ten.

There was, indeed, an important discussion concerning the future work of the Council at its meeting on 23rd January. M. Clemenceau and President Wilson then urged the prime importance of 'setting in process immediately all that was required to hasten a solution of European questions,'¹⁷ but the problems they had in mind were, apparently, those which affected the interests of the minor States rather than the more fundamental issues which the Great Powers alone could settle. This immediate tendency to concentration upon problems of comparatively minor importance was an almost inevitable consequence of the existence in Paris of a parallel Conference of all the Allies, which, though rarely meeting in plenary session, was nevertheless always a factor to be reckoned with. For, to compensate the Small Powers for their exclusion from most of the important processes of peace-making, it was necessary to give these States not only early consideration for their claims but also the impression that they were regarded as having some real importance in the Paris scheme of things. Examination of their problems could not begin until they had sent in their claims, as they had been invited to do at the plenary session of 18th January, and by the 23rd there had been a negligible response, so that further delay was inevitable. Baron Sonnino now suggested the fixing of a definite time limit, and it was agreed that all claims of the Small Powers must be in the hands of the Secretariat by 1st February.¹⁸

There was no move on the part of the Council of Ten to use this interval to begin the exploration of more fundamental issues. On the contrary President Wilson 'entirely approved of utilizing the intervals for the discussion of less important matters',¹⁹ and Mr. Lloyd George urged that they should begin with an examination of issues connected with the partition of the Ottoman territories and colonial questions. The British Premier had in

mind two factors which were, from his point of view, of primary importance. Firstly there was, in consequence of the election pledge to abolish conscription, an urgent need to facilitate demobilization, and it was in the Near East that Britain's responsibilities rendered this process difficult. Then, more important still, there was the pressure of the British Dominions. Just as the Supreme Council of the Great Powers had to deal with a parallel Conference of Allies, so also had the delegates from London to face an even more powerful influence, that of the British Empire Delegation as a whole, more powerful because of its regular meetings under Mr. Balfour's chairmanship and because the Dominions had the additional right to be represented among the Great Powers by means of the fifth place on the British Empire panel. The British Empire Delegation in all probability reproduced in miniature many of the problems of the Peace Conference, whose course it so much affected, and its records may one day prove even more valuable to the historian of the Conference than those of the Council of Four.

It was to the colonial question that the Council of Ten actually turned its attention while waiting for the filing of the claims of the Small Powers, the general principle of non-restoration of German colonies being approved on the afternoon of Friday, 24th January.²⁰ As far as a preliminary treaty with Germany was concerned this decision need only have been followed by an instruction to the Central Drafting Committee to prepare a blanket clause whereby Germany would cede to the Great Powers collectively all extra-European territories and privileges. The Council of Ten, however, plunged at once into lengthy discussions of the distribution of the colonial territories, which raised the question of mandates and trusteeship. During these discussions, statements, often lengthy, were given to the Council by the Dominion leaders, especially Messrs. Hughes and Massey, by the Chinese representative, Mr. Wellington Koo, by the Belgians, and by the French Colonial Minister, M. Simon. Not until 30th January was the colonial issue temporarily settled.

On the following day, the Council began the examination of territorial issues affecting the smaller European States, and the Roumanians and Serbs were called in.²¹ As Signor Orlando pointed out on 1st February, though the time limit had expired hardly any statements of claims had been received by the Secretariat, but the Council decided to proceed to business without

further delay.²² M. Clemenceau made no move at this stage to get the Council to deal with the issues affecting a preliminary treaty. Indeed, on 30th January, in answer to an objection to the proposed method of dealing with the claims of the smaller European States, which he wrongly took to be an objection to dealing with them at all at this stage, the Chairman made some very surprising remarks. No progress would be made, he contended, if members went on objecting. President Wilson had given very good reasons for the adjournment of the consideration of colonial questions now that they had arrived at a provisional agreement concerning mandates, and if they did not proceed to deal with the claims of the minor European States M. Clemenceau did not know what else there was for them to do.²³ It might surely have been suggested that there were other European problems, such as those connected with Germany's frontier, the solution of which was more particularly the appropriate task of the Great Powers at this time.

The Council of Ten has been severely criticized not only for its decision to deal with the claims of the Small Powers at this stage but even more for the way in which it approached them, i.e., by giving a personal hearing to the various interested parties in turn. This method of giving 'auditions' had been used as a means of assisting the Council to decide concerning matters of executive policy in eastern Europe, Poles and Czechs being called in for consultation on 29th January,²⁴ and the hearings given to the Dominion Premiers must also have been important precedents. The actual decision to adopt the practice as a settled policy was made on the afternoon of 30th January after considerable discussion, Mr. Balfour's view, that the delegates of the Small Powers 'would be much happier'²⁵ if they could present their claims in person, being eventually accepted. There was a later challenge to this decision, made on 18th February by Sir Robert Borden, who suggested that statements should be presented in writing only, but it was without effect, and the oral presentations continued.²⁶ The adoption of this method, even more than the decision to give immediate consideration to the demands of the Lesser Allies, was surely due to the parallel existence in Paris of a full Inter-Allied Conference.

February saw a spate of 'auditions'. Roumanians, Greeks, Czechs, Arabs, Belgians, Syrians, Lebanese, Serbs, Danes, Albanians, Armenians and Zionists all stated their case, mostly

at great length, the privilege granted to the Allies being extended to neutrals and racial groups.²⁷ From the point of view of the progress of the work of peace-making all this was just a waste of time on the part of the Council, for the 'visitors' usually did nothing more than repeat orally what they had put into their written statements, yet it seems that the Ten may have deluded themselves with the impression that they were doing something useful when, in reality 'they were doing nothing more than suffer, with varying degrees of courtesy, an exhausting and unnecessary imposition'.²⁸ The tactics of the delegates invited to appear varied considerably. Thus M. Bratianu, with complete self-satisfaction, opened by a reference to his having been placed once before in a similar position in Paris, when he had faced his examiners, but on that earlier occasion, he pointedly emphasized, his hearers knew more of the subject than he did.²⁹ M. Venizelos, on the other hand, was much wiser, refraining both from attempts at humour and from mere repetition of uninteresting facts, putting all in a good mood by showing albums containing excellent photographs of the sponge fisheries in the Dodecanese.³⁰ Nevertheless, as a general rule, the procedure associated with these statements must have been dull and uninspiring in the extreme.

There had been on the 27th January a general discussion as to the conduct of business on such occasions, arising from the hearings given to Dominion Premiers,³¹ Mr. Balfour having raised the question because, while 'Powers with Special Interests' were entitled to participate in any discussion of matters in which they were concerned, there had been no discussions following statements made by the Dominion leaders on the previous Friday (24th January). It had been originally intended, he pointed out, to go on to discuss colonial issues at the Friday meeting, but this had not been done. He suggested that meetings to which delegates from the Small Powers were summoned should be devoted primarily to discussion of matters in which they were interested and at which they should be present throughout. President Wilson agreed with this general contention, but suggested that the Chairman should request the representatives of the minor States to confine their attention to the subject for which their attendance had been required.

The Council accepted these views as to general procedure, but only in the case of the colonial discussions was it truly followed. During the February 'auditions' no discussions followed the

statements of the various delegations, the questions involved being at once referred to experts, and the participation of the 'Powers with Special Interests' was confined to their appearance before the various territorial committees. The question of procedure was raised again on 17th February, when it was decided to invite the Serbian delegates to state their case on the following day. The Italian members of the Council of Ten were determined to avoid any discussion with the Serbs of matters affecting the interests of Italy and declared that, unless there was a definite understanding that no discussion of any kind should follow the Serbian statement, they themselves would have to stay away from the meeting. It was then agreed that, as had been the actual practice throughout, there should be no discussion of the issues raised by the Serbian statement.³²

It has always to be remembered that the Council of Ten, as the heir to the Supreme Council of the war period, was very heavily burdened with executive work, for the state of war was not ended by the Armistices, and, though military problems were perhaps somewhat less pressing, economic matters were, in view of the continuation of the blockade, becoming more and more urgent. Never in all history had there been such complete centralization of power in the hands of a few men, coupled with such a vast field for its exercise, and it was a very unfortunate circumstance that the forces, which were powerful in America, working for the complete return to the principles of *laissez-faire* were strong enough to prevent the satisfactory adaptation of the war-time controls to the purposes of the transition period. Thus the burden resting upon the Supreme Council during the post-Armistice period was greatly increased by the fact that no satisfactory machinery existed through which its economic functions could be exercised.

Had the British proposals of October and November, by which the Allied Maritime Transport Council would have become a General Economic Council with power to co-ordinate the various economic controls, been accepted, the work of the Supreme Council would have been lightened considerably,³³ but, while the European Powers had been ready to accept, American opposition had caused the rejection of the scheme. The London Conference had then appointed a committee, on which the Four Great Powers were represented, to consider the whole problem,³⁴ and the European members had approved a scheme presented by

M. Clémentel, which aimed at a temporary continuation of some of the existing machinery,³⁵ but this also had failed to secure American approval. Yet it was realized in the United States that, unless there was to be some kind of co-operative effort to put Europe on its feet, the flow of transatlantic products to that continent would cease abruptly, and an alternative plan, for the establishment of a relief organization under American control, was therefore put forward, Mr. Herbert Hoover being suggested as Director-General.³⁶ The attitude of the United States was decisive, since American finance was the key to the whole situation, and the Council for Supply and Relief held its first meeting on 11th January. This new body had no power to co-ordinate and control the organs of economic activity that were legacies of the war years, the only co-ordinating authority being the overworked Council of Ten. Yet the need for co-ordination was very great because the question of relief in central Europe was inextricably bound up with the issues affecting the blockade, for which the Allied Blockade Council was responsible, while transport was still the concern of the A.M.T.C.

Eventually, the need for some more satisfactory economic machinery having been clearly demonstrated, the Council of Ten on the afternoon of 8th February approved a plan for the establishment in Paris of a Supreme Economic Council, composed of five representatives of each of the Four Great Powers, Belgian delegates being added later.³⁷ This body had the power to absorb or replace such existing economic controls as it might from time to time determine and possessed executive authority within its own terms of reference, though all decisions affecting policy had to be confirmed by the Council of Ten.³⁸ The chief figures of the Supreme Economic Council were Lord Robert Cecil, Mr. Herbert Hoover, M. Clémentel and Signor Crespi, the Chairmanship at first being passed in rotation among them until Lord Robert Cecil came to be the normal Chairman.

At its first meeting, on 17th February, the Council arranged for the co-ordination of the working of the various bodies concerned with economic affairs, these being instructed to continue as separate organizations but to report regularly to it. The later practice was to resolve these various bodies into departments of the Supreme Economic Council with headquarters in Paris, the Council for Supply and Relief, for example, with Mr. Hoover as Chairman, becoming the Food and Relief Section and absorbing

at the same time the Inter-Allied Food Council. The Maritime Transport Council continued for a time as one of the most important bodies working under the general direction of the Supreme Economic Council, but it was abolished in April and a new scheme substituted, according to which the Supreme Economic Council was to be advised by a Shipping Committee in Paris, while the Maritime Transport Executive was to be reorganized, and, though still established in London, to take orders from Paris. The Blockade Council became the department of the Supreme Economic Council dealing with blockade issues, with the title of the Superior Blockade Council. Full meetings of the Supreme Economic Council were held at the beginning of each week, while the various departmental bodies met later in the week.

Though it had established the Supreme Economic Council and later decided to refer to it all economic issues of a transitory nature not affecting the peace treaties themselves,³⁹ the Council of Ten itself had inevitably to deal with vital matters of economic policy, such as the feeding of Germany, conditional upon the handing over of the German mercantile marine. This important issue, affecting as it did the Allies' means of bringing economic pressure to bear upon the enemy, was closely linked with the question of enforcing the terms of the Armistice and had been discussed at length at early meetings of the Ten in January. The matter was raised again in March because of a deadlock between the Allies and the Germans concerning these points. There were exhaustive discussions on 7th and 8th March,⁴⁰ which occupied a great deal of the time of the Council of Ten, Lord Robert Cecil, Mr. Hoover, and Signor Crespi of the Supreme Economic Council being in attendance. These led to the Brussels Agreement of 13th-14th March, which regulated the economic relations between the Allies and Germany until the signature of the Versailles Treaty.

The Council of Ten had also to deal with a fluid situation in eastern Europe, where, owing to the defection and collapse of Russia, the control of Paris could not be directly exercised. The Allies had, in fact, to establish a new *point d'appui* in Poland, and the problems of that region were before the Council right from the start. At the very first meeting in Paris, on 12th January,⁴¹ Marshal Foch urged the taking of the necessary preliminary steps to facilitate the transportation of the Polish troops then in France

to Warsaw, and this theme of General Haller and his men ran right through the story of the Council of Ten, which was still discussing the same problem at its last meeting, on 24th March.⁴² In order to ensure the establishment of some form of control in eastern Europe the Council decided to establish an Inter-Allied Mission in Warsaw, to be composed of two representatives from each of the Four Great Powers.⁴³

Before the Allied Mission left for Warsaw, it endeavoured, at the request of the Council of Ten, to bring about an agreement between the Poles and Czechs in Paris which would facilitate the restoration of order in the Teschen region, where Poles and Czechs were engaged in unofficial warfare. As a result of its consideration of this problem, the Warsaw Mission reported to the Ten in favour of the dispatch of a similar body to exercise control in Teschen, and the Council approved of the suggestion.⁴⁴ At the last meeting of the Ten Dr. Lord proposed an extension of the powers of the Teschen Mission so that it might have full executive authority to act without reference to Prague or Warsaw, and the Council approved, subject to the endorsement of the Czech and Polish Governments.⁴⁵ Meanwhile on 12th February, on the proposition of Mr. Balfour, the Council of Ten had decided to establish a Polish Liaison Committee in Paris, composed of one representative from each of the Great Powers, to receive and deal with reports and requests from the Mission in Warsaw.⁴⁶

Difficulties arising from the fighting between the Poles and Ukrainians in eastern Galicia also troubled the Council of Ten, and the Polish Liaison Committee early in March drafted certain proposals relative to the situation there, Dr. Lord, recently returned from eastern Europe, afterwards appearing before them. They recommended that he be heard also by the Council of Ten, before whom he duly appeared on 19th March, after which the Council decided to send telegrams to the commanders of the opposing forces urging an immediate cessation of hostilities.⁴⁷

The situation in Russia itself, which, as we have seen, had been examined at length during the first week in Paris, when the possible representation of Russian interests at the Conference had been under consideration, continued to engage the attention of the Council at intervals. The 'Prinkipo policy', adopted in January, having failed to produce any result, the problem was further discussed in February, when Mr. Winston Churchill appeared to advocate an active policy of intervention.⁴⁸ At the

last meeting of the Council which he attended before his being wounded, M. Clemenceau declared that he wanted a day of complete freedom for contemplation of the Russian problem,⁴⁹ and so no meeting of the Council was arranged for the 19th. On this date, by ironical circumstance, a would-be assassin ensured that the Chairman would have a fortnight's respite, and also made necessary a further blank day for the Council of Ten, which did not meet again until the 21st.

There were, of course, all the time, vital executive problems concerning the military situation in the West which demanded constant attention from the Council of Ten, sitting as the Supreme War Council. These are discussed in a later chapter, for they were responsible for compelling the Council, in at least one sphere, to face up to fundamental issues affecting the settlement with Germany.

As though these big problems of executive policy were insufficient, the Council had at various times to deal with a host of miscellaneous items: a request to the Dutch Government for facilities for the passage of British troops and supplies to the Rhine Army;⁵⁰ German requests for the improvement of postal facilities in the occupied areas and for the repatriation of prisoners of war;⁵¹ and even such matters as the desire of women's organizations to send a deputation,⁵² and a proposal for a common Allied war medal.⁵³

The failure of the Council of Ten, apart from the special case of the military terms, to deal with the problems affecting the Great Powers, the settlement of which must have preceded any preliminary treaty with Germany, cannot, however, be entirely explained by the fact of its preoccupation with matters of lesser importance, such as executive business and problems forced to the front by the Dominions and minor European States. Until the end of February there were no signs of any effort to get to grips with major issues, and even then the Balfour initiative did not produce any real change of procedure. This reluctance to embark upon the examination of the most controversial topics is to be explained in part by the natural human tendency to avoid unpleasant tasks as long as possible, and to concentrate meanwhile upon more congenial work, with a hope that during the interim something may happen to make the ultimate work less unpleasant. Listening to long explanations from Bratianu might prove a trial of patience and courtesy, but it did not

threaten to bring into sharp antagonism men who wished to remain on friendly terms. Yet even this explanation by itself is inadequate, and a further reason has to be sought in the unsuitability of the Council of Ten itself for dealing with the major tasks facing the Great Powers.

It was, in fact, much too large and unwieldy for the work it was intended to complete, the inclusion of the Japanese, who were not really interested in any of the European problems, being unfortunate if not unnecessary; and the presence of the Foreign Secretaries as well as the Premiers on all occasions made any division of labour impossible. The establishment of a steering committee such as that which functioned during the Armistice negotiations would probably have enabled the Council of Ten to work in a much more satisfactory manner; but the emergence of an inner group of this kind was retarded by the absence of the leading figures in February. In March, when it was, as events proved, too late to preserve the Supreme Council in its existing shape, there were signs not only of the development of an inner group, but also of the extent to which such a body might facilitate progress. Without the guidance of such an inner committee real progress was almost impossible, the Council itself being most unsuitable for intimate and confidential discussions, and Mr. Lloyd George affirms that M. Clemenceau did not raise the question of the Rhineland before the Ten for fear of a rebuff which would be recorded in the minutes.⁵⁴ Indeed, with so many people in normal attendance at its meetings, including the secretaries and the experts of various kinds who seemed inseparable from it, it became a channel for serious leakages of information.

During the very first week in Paris we find Mr. Lloyd George complaining of leakages to the French press,⁵⁵ and on this occasion President Wilson expressed the view that secrecy in the case of large bodies was impossible. On 30th January we read of Wilson's complaining about the same weakness, distorted statements concerning his attitude on the colonial question having found their way into the papers, and threatening to treat the matter as a breach of privilege necessitating a public statement.⁵⁶ The indiscretions continued, however, right through the period of the Council of Ten, the last and most vigorous denunciation of these coming, like the first, from the British Premier, who on Friday, 21st March, referred to serious leakages of information concerning

the discussions of the previous Wednesday, when the Germano-Polish frontier had been the main topic. He complained specifically 'that some one sitting in that room had deliberately given away information', threatening to take no further part in the discussions of the Council and referring to his previous reluctance, now amply justified, to agree to the holding of the Conference in Paris.⁵⁷

At that moment the Council of Ten was doomed to disappear as the normal form of the Supreme Council of the Great Powers. It had dealt with a large amount of executive work, had brought into existence the Inter-Allied Conference, and arranged the general division of work between it and the Conference of the Great Powers. It had also, as will be shown in the following chapters, established the committees of experts which were to deal with all the frontier questions not affecting the Great Powers, and made great progress, through the appointment of various military, naval and air committees, towards the preparation of the final 'military' terms. It had, however, in no direction save this last made any progress towards the solution of those problems which the Great Powers had definitely reserved for their own decision.

CHAPTER IX

TERRITORIAL COMMITTEES

ONE very important development during the period of the Council of Ten was the establishment of committees, composed mainly of experts, to deal with the territorial problems of Europe other than those directly affecting the Great Powers. The setting-up of these bodies between 1st and 27th February was a move not planned but deemed necessary to meet immediate needs, yet the process has been held to mark a turning-point in the evolution of Conference procedure. This evolution depended very largely upon the way in which the statesmen were to employ the services of the technical advisers who were attached to the delegations of the Great Powers in such numbers. Whatever may have been the errors committed at Paris they were not due to shortage of expert advice, and the real problem to be solved concerned the method of utilizing the material available.¹

President Wilson believed that the main task of the statesmen at the Conference would be to lay down the general principles that were to govern the settlement, and then leave the detailed application of these principles to the experts. This general conception was manifested in his note of comment upon the plan submitted by Dr. Mezes for the organization of the American Delegation² and in his remarks aboard the *George Washington*,³ and has been criticized by Mr. Lansing as not embodying a sufficient realization of the importance of detailed application.⁴ It might, however, have been possible for the organization of the Conference to be developed successfully along these Wilsonian lines if the exact position of the experts had been defined from the start and if the leading statesmen had at once proceeded to deal with the fundamental principles. That they did not so proceed has been shown in the previous chapter, problems being dealt with as forced to the front by circumstances, and experts being left with little or nothing to do.⁵

The importance of President Wilson's views on this question of the use of technical advisers was due not merely to his own commanding position in January 1919, but also to the fact that attached to the American Delegation was the most elaborate

organization of experts that ever attended any Peace Conference, so that, as it has been picturesquely phrased, 'the *George Washington* creaked and groaned across the Atlantic under the weight of their erudition'.⁶ There were, of course, preparations for the process of peace-making in Great Britain from 1917 onwards, under the general supervision of Mr. Alwyn Parker, the Librarian of the Foreign Office, and the well known and excellent guide-books to all the problems likely to arise were produced by the Historical Section of the Foreign Office under the direction of Mr. Prothero. In France also there were investigations under Professor Lavissee and his 'Comité d'Etudes', but these were on a much less pretentious scale, for the extent of such preparations seems to have increased with distance from the scene of action. In the 'Inquiry', established by Colonel House in September 1917, the American experts possessed a unifying organization, definitely independent of the State Department and continuing in a modified form into the period of the Conference itself. Of this body Dr. Mezes, the brother-in-law of House, was appointed Director, but his position gradually became more or less titular, while Dr. Isaiah Bowman, as Executive Officer and Chief Territorial Expert, exercised the real controlling power.⁷

When the time came to organize the American Delegation, the State Department attempted with some initial success to reduce the experts to a definitely subordinate position and to break up the unity of Inquiry, it being decreed that the specialists were to have access to plenipotentiaries only through the Department. Nevertheless, when the President called together the experts aboard the *George Washington* for a confidential chat in his cabin on 10th December, he told them that, while in the main he expected them to fit in with the general organization of the Delegation, they were not to hesitate in an emergency to approach him directly. Then, on 17th December, a few days after the arrival of the main body of the American Delegation in Paris, the unity and status of Inquiry were re-established, both the State Department and Military Intelligence being forced to recognize its position and the right of direct approach to the Commissioners being secured.⁸ This change in the position of the American experts was important not only as far as the Delegation itself was concerned, but also because of its ultimate bearing upon the structure of the Conference as a whole.

The Rules of Procedure for the Conference, as approved by

the Council of Ten, envisaged two methods of utilizing the services of expert advisers, who were: (a) to attend with their chiefs at meetings of the Conference so as to supply information privately as required and, subject to the approval of the Conference, to make direct explanations where necessary; (b) to form committees to which might be entrusted the technical examination of any question, such examination to be followed by a report and suggestions.⁹ The French plans had indeed listed a number of topics that were to be referred to such committees, though apparently these did not include territorial matters.

Yet there was no move during the first phase at Paris, either to allow the formation of such committees by the Plenary Conference or for the Council of Ten to appoint them, and thus the experts were limited to the preparation of material for the use of their own plenipotentiaries. Had President Wilson been able during these early stages to keep the Council to the work of laying down general principles, the experts would soon have been given an effective part to play, but the development of the Conference was not along these lines, and the President's tendency to concentrate entirely upon the immediate issue was partly responsible. The circumstance of the existence of a Plenary Conference parallel with the Council of the Great Powers then resulted in an early entanglement of that Council with the affairs of the minor European States, and concerning these the assistance of the experts was vitally necessary. Yet these latter found their functions narrowly limited. A certain number found scope for wider activities through being attached to the commissions set up on 25th January or to the Financial and Economic Drafting Committees, and the military experts were usually fully employed. The large numbers of political experts, on the other hand, were wasting their time.

The initiative in bringing the experts more fully into the work of peace-making, though this was before that fixing of principles which he had deemed to be an essential preliminary, was President Wilson's. It was on 22nd January that Colonel House, who was at the time confined to his room, wrote in his Diary: 'The President came to see me to-day to tell of what was going on. . . . As far as I can see they are not getting anywhere, largely because of the lack of organization.'¹⁰ Later in the same day, when House received Sir William Wiseman, who acted as his adviser on Anglo-American relations, they both agreed that for the effective

working of the Conference the appointment of committees of experts was an urgent necessity, and Wiseman agreed to consult Sir W. Tyrrell on the matter, a preliminary Anglo-American agreement being regarded as desirable.

We know of no further moves before 29th January, when the wastage of time involved in hearing the views of Poles and Czechs on Teschen without any preparation of the ground, and a realization that the various groups of experts were not in possession of the same facts, led President Wilson to take a further step. On that afternoon, as he made his way from the Council of Ten through the ante-room, he spoke to Mr. G. L. Beer and Dr. Charles Seymour of Inquiry and asked: 'Why don't you get together with the other experts and put in a joint recommendation as to boundaries?', adding: 'The Council will approve anything you agree upon.'¹¹ Wilson followed up this suggestion in a conversation with Colonel House that same evening, and the two men arrived at an understanding which envisaged a joint examination of various questions by Anglo-American experts. In consequence of this House put Sir W. Tyrrell in touch with Dr. Mezes on the following day and urged both men to facilitate the joint examination of frontier questions by the experts of both delegations.¹²

Informal contact between the British experts and Inquiry had, indeed, been established during the very early days in Paris,¹³ but there had not previously been any definite recognition of its importance. The new and officially inspired co-operation at once facilitated an agreement on the mandate compromise proposals which were before the Council of Ten on the morning of 30th January,¹⁴ and led also to co-operation among experts of all the Great Powers as members of committees duly appointed by the Council. The move to establish these was made by Mr. Lloyd George and President Wilson on the afternoon of 30th January as an immediate result of the successful Anglo-American co-operation already begun.¹⁵ The Premier and the President both contended that such committees ought to be established and their reports received before there were any further discussions of the claims of the Small Powers by the Council of Ten, Mr. Lloyd George pointing out that the discussion of Polish and Czech affairs on the 29th had been a mistake, since there had been no adequate preparation. The general feeling was, however, in favour of deferring the appointment of expert committees until after the

hearing of the delegates of the minor State concerned in each case, Mr. Balfour suggesting that the experts, who would of course be present at the hearing, would gain by coming first of all face to face with those whose problems they would otherwise be considering *in vacuo*.

On the following day, and again on 1st February, the Council of Ten listened to statements by Roumanians and Serbs of their claims in the Banat, and at length, after the delegates from these States had withdrawn, Mr. Lloyd George once more moved for the appointment of an expert committee to examine the claims presented.¹⁶ President Wilson supported the proposal, referring to the mass of information in the possession of Inquiry and pointing out that if the British suggestion were not accepted he would have to take his stand on the views of his own experts alone, whereas he would wish to base himself upon common expert advice. The opposition came from the Italians, who maintained that any question of frontiers was bound in practice to raise political issues that were the concern of the Great Powers alone and quite unsuitable for reference to any subordinate body. This attitude was the natural result of a determination to uphold the Roumanian appeal to the continuing validity of the secret treaties. Signor Orlando wanted to know what kind of specialists it was proposed to appoint and expressed a fear that they would become examining magistrates, while Baron Sonnino urged the continued following of the existing practice whereby the plenipotentiaries of the Great Powers conferred with their own experts, and suggested that they might then go on to consult the delegates of the States concerned, 'who could give the most expert information available.'¹⁷ The Anglo-American idea nevertheless prevailed, and an important precedent was established by the setting-up of the Roumanian Affairs Committee, sometimes known as the Banat Committee.¹⁸

Mr. Lloyd George had, indeed, expressly denied that he was attempting to establish a precedent and 'fully admitted that this procedure could not be introduced as a permanent arrangement',¹⁹ yet such it proved to be, for it became the normal practice to refer claims presented orally to new or existing committees for investigation. Thus the hearings given to Greeks, Czechs and Belgians were each followed by the appointment of a new committee, while the statement of the Yugoslavs was referred to the existing Roumanian Affairs Committee, that of

the Albanians to the Greek Committee, and that of the Danes to the Belgian Committee.

The Polish Affairs Committee, though usually grouped with those mentioned above, had an entirely different origin, arising from the exercise of executive powers by the Council of Ten and illustrating the empirical manner in which the general organization of the Conference developed. First had come the establishment of the Allied Mission in Warsaw, according to the decision of the Council of Ten on 22nd January, and then on 12th February came the decision to establish the Liaison Committee in Paris to deal with reports and requests coming from the Warsaw Mission. No instructions were given to this Committee to prepare a report on the question of the Polish frontiers, though the Teschen Control Mission, in addition to its executive duties, had been instructed to make preliminary inquiries concerning the Czecho-Polish frontier. The matter was discussed at the meeting of the Polish Committee on 20th February, when, in reply to M. Torretta's question as to whether it was within their competence to ascertain the desires of the Poles with regard to their future frontiers, M. Jules Cambon expressed the view that they were empowered to consider any matters affecting Poland. The Committee thereupon decided to invite the Poles to appear before it and state their claims, and also took steps to ascertain the views of the Warsaw Mission on the subject.²⁰ It may have been as a result of this move that Mr. Balfour on 26th February called the attention of the Council of Ten to the fact that the problem of the frontier between Germany and Poland had not been specifically referred to any committee, and the Council by its decision on this occasion fully legalized the approach of the Liaison Committee as far as the frontier in question was concerned.²¹

The instructions to these committees were rather lacking in precision, so that their members were far from clear as to the exact part which they were expected to play in the process of peace-making. Their work was to be in some degree similar to that of the Vienna Statistical Committee, established through the inspiration of Castlereagh in December 1814 to provide reliable statistics of population in all the areas whose transfer was under consideration;²² for they were to examine the facts and figures presented by the plenipotentiaries of the minor States to buttress their claims and to provide if possible a unanimous statement as to the exact truth of the matter. These committees of 1919 were,

however, to go further than the Vienna body, which, contrary to the intention of Castlereagh, was strictly confined to the consideration of actual numbers, for they were 'to make recommendations for a just settlement',²³ yet they received no definite instruction as to the principles to be applied.

President Wilson suggested that the experts should not take political issues into their consideration, and this appears to have been the general view of the Council of Ten, but, as the Italians saw clearly, any recommendation for a settlement must, in effect, take political factors into account. There was, it would appear, an unwritten understanding that the experts were to endeavour to draw the frontiers in accordance with the principle of nationality and that the application of this principle did not constitute an incursion into the sphere of political issues; but the extent to which, if at all, other factors than the supposed wishes of the inhabitants were to be considered was not defined. It has been well said of the Greek Affairs Committee that, while they were instructed 'to decide whether the area claimed by Greece in the Smyrna region was one which accorded with the zones of Greek population', they were not to consider the vital question as to 'whether it was a wise or an unwise thing to allow the Greeks into Asia Minor at all'.⁴⁰ The Italians, moreover, consistently maintained with regard both to Schleswig²⁵ and the delimitation of the frontier between Austria and Yugoslavia that, as M. Tardieu phrased it when reporting on behalf of the Roumanian and Yugoslav Affairs Committee, 'any question of a consultation or inquiry as well as of a plebiscite bore an eminently political character which removed it from the competence of the territorial committees'.²⁶ Thus there was considerable doubt even concerning the competence of the committees to apply the principle of self-determination. As to what weight, if any, should be given to other factors, there was no guidance. Mr. Balfour put forward the view that strategical considerations should be taken into account,²⁷ but the Council of Ten expressed no definite opinion on the subject. Moreover, the experts were never told to what degree economic factors were to be allowed to override the principle of nationalism, and still less could they expect any instructions as to what notice they were to take of claims based upon historic rights or upon the secret treaties of the war years.

It can only be said that in a very general and vague way

the committees felt themselves debarred from the consideration of general political questions. Their exclusion from any investigation of matters affecting the interests of the Great Powers was by no means vague, the matter being first raised in connection with the hearing of the Serbian delegates on 18th February, the terms of reference of their claims to the existing Roumanian, or Banat, Committee being carefully worded so as to exclude all issues affecting the interests of Italy.²⁸ Later, on 27th February, when the instructions to the Central Committee were under consideration, there was a general decision to except 'such frontier questions as any of the (Great) Powers concerned may reserve for discussion in the first instance at the Quai d'Orsay Council'.²⁹

President Wilson's original conception of the laying down of general principles before there should be any reference to experts not having been carried out, the members of the various committees were left very largely to their own devices. They had been requested 'to reduce the questions for decision within the narrowest possible limits and to make recommendations for a just settlement',³⁰ this formula, first occurring in the instructions to the Roumanian Affairs Committee, being repeated in every other case except those of the Belgian and Polish Committees. Realizing that in a general way they were barred from a consideration of political issues and in a specific way from examination of matters affecting the Great Powers themselves, the experts naturally thought of themselves as exercising advisory functions only and they tended to act accordingly. They were not aware that their responsibilities were far greater, since, with one exception, all reports unanimously accepted by them were to be adopted by the Great Powers without further discussion. That they were thus unaware is not surprising, for it is probable that the Council of Ten in appointing them did not contemplate any such development.

Another fundamental weakness of these committees resulted from their being appointed from day to day, without reference to any general plan, to investigate claims made by particular Small Powers following upon the appearances of their delegates before the Council of Ten. Sir Robert Borden did indeed suggest, on 18th February, that the Council ought to make up its mind in advance as to what problems it intended to refer to committees, but the suggestion was ignored.³¹ This rather haphazard procedure, which, it has been shown, resulted from the general

character of the Conference, involved the acceptance of these minor States as units for discussion rather than the enemy States that were being deprived of their territory. This was a particular example of the general lack of co-ordination that was such a feature of the Conference as a whole, affecting as it did the internal working of the chief delegations and the making of the separate sections of the various treaties, so that until it was too late the treaties were never considered as units.³²

A partial remedy for this state of affairs was the Central Territorial Committee, the appointment of which by the Council of Ten on 27th February was, however, as much a matter of empiricism as that of any other committees, being due primarily to the interest of the Italians in the question of the Austro-German frontier. This interest led Baron Sonnino, on 26th February, to point out that no committee had been established to consider the frontiers of Germany in general and that consequently there would be areas not covered by the reports of the various committees when they began to come in.³³ The Italian point would indeed have been adequately met, as Balfour showed, by the appointment of a committee to deal with the precise question of the Austro-German frontier, but this method of procedure did not appear to command any support and, instead, Mr. Lansing raised the question of co-ordination, pointing out that there ought to be a committee to consider the German frontiers as a whole, Baron Sonnino then referring to the fact that no body was examining the frontiers of Turkey or Bulgaria as a whole either. M. Pichon thought that all the really important frontiers in question were covered by the existing committees except the Turkish frontiers other than that with Greece, and he held that these might be referred to the Greek and Albanian Affairs Committee. Mr. Balfour agreed that co-ordination would be necessary, but contended that the process could be carried through by the Supreme Council after the receipt of reports of the various committees. The Americans, nevertheless, continued to favour the appointment of a co-ordinating committee and this view prevailed.

On 27th February the Council of Ten approved a resolution moved by Colonel House providing for the appointment of a committee 'to expedite the work of the Conference in defining the approximate future frontiers of the enemy countries in the preliminary treaties of peace' by (a) the co-ordination of the work of the committees already in existence, and (b) by dealing with

'any part of the frontiers of enemy States which are not included in the scope of any committee', frontiers affecting the interests of the Great Powers being specifically excepted.³⁴ The new body, which met for the first time on 5th March, and which was at first called by the Americans 'The Commission on the Frontiers of Enemy Powers',³⁵ had therefore originally a dual purpose.

The members, beginning with a general consideration of the scope of their work, decided that they need not deal with the German frontiers outside Europe, for which a general clause of renunciation would suffice, and then turned to consider the Austro-German frontier, which had been the immediate cause of their being appointed. They decided at once against the recommendation of any change and reaffirmed this decision on 15th March, when they also held it to be beyond their competence to suggest the imposition upon Germany of a pledge to respect the political and economic integrity of German Austria, simply observing instead that there was an independent Austria to be separated from Germany by the frontier of 1st August 1914.³⁶ As to any other frontiers not covered by existing bodies they decided to seek more precise instructions, and at their second meeting, on 7th March, the text of a letter to the Council of Ten on this subject was approved, it being agreed at the same time that, on the receipt of the required instructions, they would at once proceed to appoint sub-committees to deal with such frontiers as were deemed to require attention.³⁷

The more precise instructions desired were not forthcoming, and thus the Central Committee became a co-ordinating body pure and simple, its function being the examination and, in certain instances, the reference back of reports from the five committees before passing them on to the Supreme Council. To facilitate this process the Central Committee, on 7th March, decided to issue a circular letter to the chairmen of the other committees requesting them to submit copies of their reports, accompanied by maps, detailed descriptions of new frontier lines and statistics of populations affected by proposed transfers of territory.³⁸ Revision of the work of the committees in general was not at this stage an easy matter, however, and the modifications that the co-ordinating body was able to effect were very limited in scope, so that the new machinery proved inadequate for the rectification of the original error of the Council of Ten in basing the territorial committees upon the minor States as units.

By a curious irony of circumstances one of the chief results of the establishment and working of this Central Committee was the disruption of the American Inquiry, which had been so closely connected with the whole development of territorial procedure, for the United States representative on the Committee was Dr. Mezes, who, with Colonel House, had by this time lost all real touch with the general body of experts which had originally been under their control, and he came into conflict with Dr. Bowman, who was now in effective control. The issue was one of principle as well as personality, for, while Dr. Mezes was eager to co-ordinate,³⁹ Dr. Bowman held that the specialists of the various separate committees were more competent to decide concerning contentious issues than the non-specialists of the co-ordinating body. This difference of view went outside the limited scope of the territorial committees and affected the general use of experts in Paris. Thus, when Dr. Mezes called in Mr. G. L. Beer and Professor Shotwell to advise him concerning the general American attitude to the claims of Italy and they gave advice, which Mezes presented to President Wilson, running counter to the conclusions of the specialists who had been examining the particular questions involved, Bowman and these specialists felt bound to protest in a personal letter to Wilson.⁴⁰ These incidents were, it is believed, the beginning of the rather mysterious alienation between the President and Colonel House.⁴¹

In view of the comparative failure of the co-ordinating body and the practice of the general acceptance by the Supreme Council of unanimous reports from the five committees, a great responsibility rested upon the members of those committees, but unfortunately these were in most cases appointed without due regard for the importance of their task. Membership was of course limited to representatives of the Great Powers, and, since Japan was not in every case disposed to appoint members, and since Italian interests were of a strictly limited kind, the general working of the committees depended upon the delegates of the three Western Powers. Since the initiative responsible for the establishment of the committees was Anglo-American it might have been supposed that Great Britain and the United States would control them, but the surprising fact was that they were run very largely by the French, and only kept in bounds by unofficial Anglo-American team-work outside.

The Americans had, of course, plenty of experts for the manning

of the committees, but these lacked actual practical experience and were inclined to take unbalanced views of the situation. This was especially true of Dr. Lord, who, having gone out with the Warsaw Mission at the beginning of February, returned to Paris in March to act as a member of the Polish Liaison Committee. His attitude, which greatly influenced President Wilson, could hardly be unaffected by the fact of his recent conversion to Catholicism and his conception of the Poles as sacred crusaders for that faith.

A heavy responsibility therefore rested upon the British delegates, who were, however, chosen in a most unsatisfactory manner. To begin with, Mr. Lloyd George filled up some of the places allotted to him with Dominion delegates in need of employment, who, at the best, needed coaching, like Sir Robert Borden,⁴² and, at the worst, preserved a general attitude of 'benevolent boredom',⁴³ like Mr. Cook of Australia, who, when asked to express the British view of Bohemian frontiers, could only mutter that they were all a happy family, to the evident discomfort of the interpreter.⁴⁴ For the rest the British representatives were experts of the Foreign Office chosen by Mr. Balfour on the recommendation of Sir Eyre Crowe, and the resources of that section of the British Delegation were inadequate. Crowe himself was very much overworked, having to serve on nearly every one of the committees, and young men like Mr. Harold Nicolson were given responsibilities for which, as Mr. Nicolson himself admits,⁴⁵ they were hardly ready, so that Mr. Balfour's remark about 'ignorant men with a child to lead them' was, perhaps, not entirely inappropriate. Meanwhile the experts of the War Office section, such as Colonel Kisch, who had wide knowledge of frontier problems, were ignored.⁴⁷

The French experts had in general more practical experience, and M. Clemenceau was fortunate in having men like M. Tardieu and M. Jules Cambon, who, while they were political nominees and in close touch with him, did not need coaching. Moreover, these two men between them exercised the chairmanship of all the committees, a strategic advantage for the French, whose general policy of stretching the boundaries of the new States so as to give them such frontiers, wealth and means of communication as they deemed necessary for their security, prevailed in the committees.

For their purely geographical knowledge the committees relied

upon the World Series of 'millionth' maps, the complete accuracy of which was accepted by all concerned.⁴⁸ Knowledge of other kinds was obtained from sources more open to question. The original proposal for the appointment of the first of these territorial committees, made by the British Premier on 1st February, provided for consultations between the experts and representatives of the peoples concerned, but this provision came in for criticism, on the ground that it would involve delay, especially if the committee should decide to conduct inquiries on the spot. Mr. Lloyd George then contended that the new body could work as the Teschen Control Mission had worked, and, as that Mission had not yet left Paris, he must have been referring to its consultation with Czech and Polish delegates to the Conference before leaving. The clause permitting such consultations by the experts was therefore retained in the instructions, but was not interpreted as involving journeys of investigation, though the Polish and Czech Committees could draw upon evidence supplied by the Warsaw and Teschen Missions.

The consultations in Paris turned out to be merely a repetition of the 'auditions' arranged by the Council of Ten, and just as wasteful of time. Before the delegates of the interested States were received by the committees the members of the latter agreed upon the questions that were to be put, and when M. Venizelos was admitted before the Greek Affairs Committee, having been previously sent out of the room while the questions were decided, there was a suggestion of a Christmas-party atmosphere. 'I almost expect him to begin: "Animal, vegetable, or mineral?"', wrote Mr. Nicolson.⁴⁹ After the questions had been put and answered the visitors withdrew, and all the discussions of the committees were held in camera. M. Bratianu later made a general attack upon this policy, demanding access to the minutes of the Roumanian and Yugoslav Affairs Committee so that he might follow the arguments leading to the fixing of his country's frontiers short of his claims, with a view to rebuttal, but his plea was ignored.⁵⁰

There was, naturally enough in the circumstances, no provision for the hearing of enemy evidence by the committees. At the time of their appointment no responsible statesman seems even to have thought of such a thing. Yet the British Premier, in the development of his attack upon the report of the Polish Committee on 19th March, asked whether the Council of Ten was going to

give final definition to the Germano-Polish frontier on the evidence of one party alone, the other side not having been heard. To this M. Cambon, who was probably very much surprised, replied that of course the Committee had heard only the Poles, and that 'it had not been commissioned to listen to the Germans'.⁵¹

Though all these territorial committees were appointed by the Council of Ten, only two of their reports, a preliminary one concerning the revision of the Treaties of 1839 from the Belgian and Danish Affairs Committee⁵² and the report of the Polish Committee on the Germano-Polish frontier,⁵³ were actually brought before the Council, which was in general responsible for no more than the initiation of processes of peace-making. The important exception to this rule, provided by the handling of the preparation of the military, naval, and air clauses of the German Treaty, must now claim attention.

CHAPTER X

THE RENEWAL OF THE ARMISTICE

THOUGH the Great Powers had reserved for their own consideration all the more important problems affecting the peace settlement, the Supreme Council of those Powers, which, during the first two and a half months of the Conference, took the form of the Council of Ten, made no general attempt to deal with these problems during that period, being very largely engrossed in executive business, as has been shown. In the military sphere alone did the Council approach one of these fundamental issues, and it is significant that this approach resulted from the exercise of executive authority in relation to the Armistice.

There were two aspects of Armistice policy: (*a*) the enforcement of terms already accepted by the enemy; and (*b*) the imposition, when necessary, of additional terms on renewal, the latter process raising the more difficult problems. The detailed day-to-day supervision of the execution of the military clauses was carried out by the Armistice Commission at Spa with its five sub-committees dealing with: (1) the repatriation of prisoners of war; (2) the surrender of weapons and aeroplanes; (3) the transfer of machinery; (4) the transfer of railway rolling stock; (5) financial and commercial questions. The carrying-out of the naval clauses was controlled by the Allied Naval Armistice Commission, acting under the direct supervision of the Allied Naval Council and communicating by wireless with the German admiral appointed for the purpose.¹ General policy with regard to the Armistice was the concern of the Council of Ten, which, for the purpose of dealing with these matters, sat, with the military representatives in attendance, as the Supreme War Council.

The agreement of 11th November had, as we have seen, been twice renewed, with additions, before the inauguration of the Plenary Conference,² these renewals being the result of the failure of the Great Powers to arrive at an early peace, which in due course raised very serious problems for settlement by the delegates of those Powers as soon as the general organization of the Conference had been established. The lapse of time made drastic changes in the policy in force since November appear inevitable.

Factors resulting from that lapse of time and apparently making such drastic changes essential may be summarized as follows. First, there was the excessive and continuing demobilization of the British and American military forces in the west, a process which Marshal Foch had evidently not foreseen when he was setting forth his original demands, the bases of the agreement of 11th November. Connected with this demobilization was the British demand for the immediate abolition of compulsory military service in Germany, a political matter arising from the circumstances of the December elections. A parallel demobilization was also being carried out by the British and American fleets, thus making the continued enforcement of the blockade a more difficult matter. The blockade was assuming greater importance as a method of final coercion should military forces prove inadequate, but its effect upon the German internal situation, which might, it was feared, bring Bolshevism into western Europe, made relaxation desirable and suggested that any stiffening would be disastrous. The related problem of the handing over of the German mercantile marine in return for controlled deliveries of foodstuffs—a demand not included in the November agreement because of American opposition, but accepted in principle by the Germans when the Armistice was renewed in January—had not yet been finally settled because of German failure to implement the agreement. Meanwhile the continuance of hostilities between Germans and Poles, and the opposition of the former to the transport of Haller's Army via Danzig, tended to emphasize the inadequacy of Allied coercive power as applied to eastern Europe. In the background all the time were allegations of German failure to carry out all the terms of the original Armistice, e.g., in connection with the surrender of submarines.

These issues were first raised as matters of urgency by the British members of the Supreme Council during the second week in Paris, Mr. Lloyd George emphasizing that Britain was unwilling to maintain under arms the large number of men required by the Foch policy and suggesting as an alternative an extensive disarmament of Germany.³ After the shelving of the British suggestion of a Disarmament Commission and the decision of the Great Powers to keep the matter in their own hands, the Supreme Council proceeded to deal with it by consultations with the military and naval experts and the establishment of *ad hoc* committees with precise terms of reference and instructions to report

at an early date. This method of procedure, by which much of the most important work of the Conference was to be done, was used by the Council of Ten only in connection with the naval and military terms and the related problems of the Kiel Canal and submarine cables.

On the morning of the 24th February Marshal Foch appeared before the Ten, sitting as the Supreme War Council, to read a memorandum on the military situation on the Western Front, and, after some discussion had followed, it was decided to appoint a committee, on which each of the Great Powers with armies in the west was to be represented, to consider: (a) the strength of the armies to be maintained by the Allies in that theatre during the remainder of the period of truce; and (b) the disarmament of Germany, coupled with guarantees necessary to ensure the fulfilment of the terms to be imposed.⁴ M. Loucheur, because of his knowledge of the munitions industry, was chosen to preside over the Committee, which met for the first time on 27th January and appointed military and technical sub-committees, whose reports were approved at a further plenary meeting on 5th February. M. Loucheur reported to the Supreme War Council on behalf of the Committee on the afternoon of 7th February, presenting recommendations for the fixing of a definite maximum limit for German military strength and armament, the excess troops to be demobilized and excess arms to be handed over, while replacement of the latter by new manufacture was to be prevented, either by the establishment of Allied Missions at the chief German munitions centres or by military occupation of the Ruhr.⁵

After some discussion of the report the Council accepted a proposal of Mr. Lloyd George for the establishment of a second and smaller body, the Committee of Three (M. Tardieu, Mr. Lansing and Lord Milner), to investigate further the question of German stores of war material and the amount to be surrendered and to report within twenty-four hours.⁶ This body, under the chairmanship of M. Tardieu, got to work at once and presented its proposals to the Supreme War Council on the afternoon of 8th February, the essence of these being that the Germans were to hand over all war material in excess of a fixed maximum quantity which they would be allowed to retain.⁷

Action by the Supreme Council in accordance with the recommendations of these two committees was rendered difficult by serious differences of opinion arising from the attitude of

President Wilson, who was resolutely opposed to monthly attempts to increase the stringency of the terms of the Armistice, partly because he deemed such attempts to be 'not sportsmanlike',⁸ and even more because he feared that a German refusal to give way on some comparatively trivial point, or failure to comply completely with the terms imposed, might place the Allies unnecessarily in the position of having no option but to renew the war for the sake of prestige. If it were indeed found necessary to introduce new items into the Armistice on renewal, he contended that German consent should be secured by the use of the economic bargaining power which the Allies possessed, relaxations of the blockade being offered in return for acceptance of further military demands. Furthermore, the President was very much against a demand for the handing over by the Germans of an unspecified amount of war material in excess of a fixed amount to be retained, believing that such a policy would lead to continued disputes as to excess amounts still supposed to be in enemy possession and to repeated demands for further surrenders. Instead, he held firmly to the opinion that any further demand for the surrender of war material should be for a precise quantity. A necessary preliminary to such a policy must be the ascertaining of the exact amounts of war material then under German control, and, accordingly, the Supreme Council decided to postpone any decision while the Germans were asked to supply exact information on the subject.⁹ Nevertheless, from the records available, it would seem that this information was never obtained.

It was at this point that there was developed the idea that there should be a note of finality associated with the next renewal of the Armistice, on which occasion the Allied and Associated Powers were to present their ultimate demands in the military and naval sphere, this being the natural resultant of the Anglo-French desire for further reduction of German forces and the Wilsonian opposition to renewed and increasing demands. The growth of this idea was greatly assisted by the attitude of some of the Allied admirals, who were alarmed lest the continuing demobilization of their fleets should make impossible the enforcement of the blockade, on which, as they knew, the statesmen in Paris were depending for their ultimate coercive power.

The initiative on this occasion seems to have been taken by Admiral Wemyss, who, during the last week of January, suggested to his colleagues, Admirals de Bon and Benson, that they should

take concerted action to induce the Supreme War Council to come to a final naval and military settlement with Germany on the occasion of the next renewal of the Armistice.¹⁰ Admiral Benson needed some persuasion, but de Bon agreed at once, and the ready co-operation of Marshal Foch was also secured. It was decided that an immediate approach should be made by these service chiefs to their political heads in Paris, Wemyss writing to Mr. Lloyd George, Foch to M. Clemenceau, and Benson to President Wilson.

We do not know exactly how these statesmen received the letters, our only piece of evidence being a brief record, in the minutes of the meeting of the Council of Ten on 1st February, of authorization granted by that body to the admirals of the Naval Council to prepare naval clauses for presentation to the Germans.¹¹ Wemyss having been informed of this decision by M. Clemenceau,¹² the admirals speedily put together fifteen clauses concerning Germany and three affecting Austria-Hungary, and attached to them an explanatory letter setting forth their view that the Conference, by its method of going to work, had made necessary an unfortunate extension of the period of naval and military tension, and expressing the hope that a definite settlement might now be reached.¹³

The narrative of Lady Wemyss, which is far from precise as to dates and times, suggests that the members of the Supreme Council, occupied as they were at this time with the urgent question of the renewal of the Armistice that would be necessary within a few days, were not ready to entertain the recommendations of Admiral Wemyss and his colleagues.¹⁴ We are told of a fruitless wait by the naval experts in the ante-room at the Quai d'Orsay from 3 to 5.30 one afternoon, and it was not until the afternoon of 8th February that they were heard by the Council, which had just been considering the report of the Committee of Three. Admiral de Bon then put forward the views which he and his colleagues had already included in the covering letter, and the accompanying recommendations were formally presented, their reception being rather unfavourable.¹⁵ The minutes of the Supreme Council give no indication of any heated exchanges, merely showing that the members in general considered the naval proposals as not relevant to the business in hand; but Lady Wemyss suggests tension between her husband, on the one hand, and President Wilson and Mr. Balfour, on the other.

The Council, as we have seen, did not come to any definite decision concerning the impending renewal of the Armistice after hearing the report of the Committee of Three on the 8th, and the matter became more pressing each day. On the afternoon of 10th February the subject was once again considered by the Council,¹⁷ the general question of military and economic coercive power being examined, and it was decided to appoint yet another *ad hoc* committee to report on this subject within two days.¹⁸ This body, the Joint Military and Economic Committee, composed of one military and one economic adviser from each of the four Great Powers, met under the presidency of Marshal Foch and at his headquarters on the 11th, the commanders-in-chief and the admirals being also called in for consultation. The report of the Committee was presented by General Weygand to the meeting of the Supreme War Council on the morning of the following day, 12th February, and there were three main items. The economic experts made their suggestions for the use of economic pressure by the withholding or delaying of supplies, but expressed the view that, because of the probable effects upon the internal situation in Germany, such action should only be taken in the last resort. The military delegates brought forward again the basic principles of the report of the Loucheur Committee, the definite reduction and limitation of enemy forces and armaments and control to ensure compliance. The last and most important item, the inclusion of which may quite reasonably have been due in some degree to the attitude of the admirals, was a recommendation that naval and military experts should be reappointed at once to draw up final terms which should then be imposed upon the enemy.¹⁹

After the presentation of this report there followed a very important discussion of the position by the members of the Supreme War Council.²⁰ President Wilson strongly supported the suggestion of a final naval and military settlement, declaring that, while he was not prepared to run the risk of a renewal of war in order to secure successive, and therefore irritating, additions to the original Armistice, he would be ready to use all the power of the United States to compel Germany to accept final terms. M. Clemenceau urged that at the moment they were concerned with the immediate renewal of the Armistice, which would expire on the 17th before there could be any preparation and presentation of final terms, but Mr. Balfour pointed out that

their immediate action must be governed by their general policy and suggested a temporary extension of the existing agreement without modification, pending the early conclusion of a final arrangement. M. Clemenceau, however, was rather uneasy about the suggested procedure, fearing on the one hand that the President's impending visit to Washington would delay the preparation of the final terms, thus prolonging the existing unsatisfactory situation indefinitely, and, on the other hand, that the separation of military from other fundamental issues was not in the general interests of French policy. At the close of the morning meeting Mr. Balfour in a composite resolution outlined a policy which was the basis of the discussion of the afternoon.²¹

The afternoon meeting of the 12th began as a 'Meeting of the Representatives of the Five Great Powers' without the military, and at the outset M. Clemenceau, on receiving from President Wilson an assurance that the latter's impending absence would not hinder the preparation of final naval and military terms, indicated his general willingness to fall into line. Consequently, after some further consideration, the Council of Ten accepted the Balfour resolution, thus deciding upon the following course of action. First, the existing Armistice was to be renewed for an indefinite period, terminable by the Allies at any time after three days' notice. Then a Naval, Military and Air Committee, under the presidency of Marshal Foch, was to be established immediately to draw up final naval, military and air terms, this body to consist of the commanders-in-chief and three other delegates, one representing each of the three services, from each of the Five Great Powers, nominations from all except Japan being immediately forthcoming. After their approval by the Supreme War Council the terms prepared by this Committee were to be 'presented for signature to the Germans', and the latter were to be informed at once of the Allied intention to adopt this procedure. Finally, after the German acceptance of these terms, there was to be a partial relaxation of the blockade so that Germany might receive controlled quantities of food and raw materials, but, to avoid any appearance of bargaining, it was agreed that this last proposal should not be communicated to the Germans in advance.²² Later in the afternoon, after a short interval, the meeting was resumed as one of the Supreme War Council with the military present, and all the above decisions, except that relating to the blockade, were formally submitted.²³ On the following day, in

order to meet the wishes of the Italians, it was agreed that the Naval, Military and Air Committee should also be charged with the preparation of terms applicable to Austria-Hungary.²⁴

Thus the Supreme War Council had been brought to think seriously of the preparation of final naval and military terms to be imposed upon Germany in the course of its deliberations upon problems arising from the Armistice. The final terms were thought of primarily as suitable for inclusion in a final armistice convention. Yet by a very natural association of ideas such terms would easily come to be connected in the minds of the members of the Council with the conception of an early, and therefore preliminary, treaty of peace. If the demands now to be made upon Germany in the naval and military sphere were to be indeed final, there could obviously be no further requirements, even in a treaty of peace to follow. Final naval and military armistice terms must then be identical with naval and military peace terms, and this the Supreme War Council tacitly recognized. An understanding of this matter of policy and principle did not, however, by any means involve an understanding as to procedure.

There were apparently three procedural possibilities if an early naval and military settlement were to be arranged. The Supreme War Council might proceed, as on previous occasions, by way of the Armistice Commission at Spa, and it is to be noted that President Wilson had, as early as January, expressed a preference for the use of this channel in fixing the maximum of German forces because only thus could there be any contact with the enemy, who must be consulted as to the strength required to maintain internal order.²⁵ If this procedure were followed, the naval and military terms would be embodied first of all in an armistice convention and would at a later stage be repeated in a treaty of peace. The terms might, however, be presented right away, not in the form of a convention, but as a treaty of peace containing naval and military clauses only. Thirdly, these clauses might be joined with others in a preliminary treaty of wider scope. As Mr. D. H. Miller has pointed out, however, one can hardly imagine that, in practice, M. Clemenceau or any other Frenchman would have agreed to resume normal official relations with Germany while the sovereignty of the Reich over Alsace-Lorraine was left theoretically intact, or that President Wilson would have accepted a treaty of peace containing no reference to the League of Nations.²⁶ A separate naval and military treaty of *peace* may

therefore be regarded as ruled out, and we may assume that any immediate settlement with the enemy must have been either by an armistice convention containing naval and military terms only, or by a preliminary treaty containing other clauses of a fundamental nature in addition. These procedural issues were not at this stage faced either by the members of the Supreme Council or by the experts, who were all by no means consistent in their phrasology or clear as to the exact legal significance of the terms they employed.

When the Council, sitting as the Council of Ten, decided on 1st February to empower the admirals to prepare final naval terms, the resolution of authorization referred to the 'Naval Peace Terms Committee', which was to draft clauses for 'the Peace Treaty with Germany'.²⁷ In response to this decision the naval experts, as we have seen, presented draft clauses with a covering letter in which they expressed the hope that the Conference might 'decide as soon as possible the definite naval and military conditions to be inserted in the Peace Preliminaries', stated that their own proposals were accordingly submitted and suggested that 'other Ministerial Departments might, no doubt, do the same'. They further suggested that when the Armistice was prolonged, or soon after, all the enemy Governments might be informed of 'the conditions to be imposed as peace preliminaries, those conditions replacing those of the Armistice'.²⁸

Admiral de Bon used similar language in addressing the Supreme War Council, urging that the statesmen should 'lay down at once the general principles which should form the preliminaries of peace'.²⁹ Admiral Wemyss also appears to have talked in the same manner, and it was this that caused President Wilson and Mr. Balfour, who were preoccupied at the moment with the problem of the renewal of the Armistice, to object. 'Does the Admiral speak of peace?' Wilson is represented as saying, to which Wemyss is said to have replied: 'Yes, Mr. President, I always understood that was what we were here for.'³⁰ Mr. Balfour noted that subjects such as Heligoland, the Kiel Canal, and the German colonies were introduced into the report of the admirals and expressed his opinion that clauses of such a nature could not be included in the naval terms of an armistice, and President Wilson, agreeing with Mr. Balfour, said that it was impossible to anticipate conditions of peace in the renewal of the Armistice, adding that 'the present Assembly was not concluding Peace terms'.³¹

The report of the Joint Military and Economic Committee, presented by General Weygand to the Supreme War Council on 12th February, made use of phrases similar to those of the admirals, for the concluding recommendation in favour of the appointment of a committee of experts contained a statement that its purpose was to prepare 'naval and military terms of peace'.³² On this occasion the members of the Council, having come to the conclusion that final naval and military terms must be prepared, made no objection to the phraseology of the report, and the second paragraph of the Balfour resolution that was adopted at the afternoon meeting, provided for the drafting of 'detailed and final naval, military and air conditions of the preliminaries of peace',³³ while the third paragraph stated that there should be some relaxation of the blockade 'after the signature of these preliminaries of peace'. President Wilson, in supporting the adoption of this new policy, stated that after the experts had done their work 'the Armistice would then be ended by the formulation of definite preliminary terms of peace on military conditions'.³⁴

If these expressions are to be taken at their face value they must be held to indicate an intention on the part of the Supreme Council to conclude a treaty of peace containing naval and military conditions only, but, for the reasons given above, this would appear to be unthinkable even were it not contradicted by later evidence that the statesmen had armistice procedure in mind. It might be contended that the admirals had in mind a real treaty of peace, for, as we have seen, their clauses covered such topics as Heligoland, the Kiel Canal, submarine cables and colonies, and they had suggested that other ministerial departments might also submit clauses. President Wilson seems to have emphasized this fact when on the 12th he expressly stated that 'the question of the Kiel Canal and the question of the cables included in the naval report would have to be dissociated from the purely naval conditions to be imposed at the close of the Armistice. These matters concerned the ultimate peace.'³⁵

The procedure contemplated by the admirals would appear, then, to have been different from that which the Supreme Council had in mind on 12th February. Yet on the 13th Admiral Wemyss, who had returned to London after the meeting of the 8th, received a telegram from Admiral Hope in Paris telling him that 'all his terms had been accepted by the Peace Conference', and he

replied: 'I am perfectly delighted at the turn affairs have taken, and do take a certain credit to myself for having stirred the mud up. . . . I cannot understand Wilson's attitude. You say that he never seems to have grasped the idea, whereas I put it straight to them at the Supreme War Council.'³⁶ The context gives no definite indication as to 'the idea' referred to. If these words be held to indicate the conception of a preliminary treaty of peace, including clauses affecting the Kiel Canal, etc., then it was an idea that the whole Council had apparently rejected, and Wemyss's satisfaction concerning the decision of the 12th seems hard to understand. If they be held to refer merely to the idea of the conclusion of a separate naval and military treaty at an early date, then the reference to Wilson is not easily to be explained, for it was from M. Clemenceau and not from the President that objections had come.

One idea which Admiral Wemyss himself, in company with most of the experts and plenipotentiaries concerned, had completely failed as yet to grasp was that of the procedural differences between an armistice convention, a separate military treaty, and a preliminary treaty of wider scope. No explanation of the various inconsistencies of phraseology at this stage seems possible except on the supposition that the decision of 12th February was one of principle and not of procedure. Final naval and military terms were to be prepared at once and presented to the enemy, but no one was quite clear as to how this was to be done. Had the Foch Committee worked with the speed then expected of it, the Supreme Council would have been compelled to face this procedural issue in February, but, owing to the unexpected delay, it was not faced until the return of President Wilson in March, by which time circumstances had changed considerably.

The President left for Washington on 14th February, and two days later the period of truce was extended by the third Convention of Trier.³⁷ Reporting upon this to the Supreme War Council on 17th February, Marshal Foch stated that the chief objections of the Germans had been to the insistence of the Allies upon the cessation of hostilities against the Poles and to suggestions that there had been wilful failure to carry out clauses previously accepted. There had been German requests for the repatriation of prisoners of war and for the cessation of seizure by the Allies of the properties of certain German industrialists in the occupied areas, and there had also been a tendency to delay signature

because of the faulty means of communication with Berlin and Weimar, but a threat of force had caused the enemy to give way. After signing, the Germans had handed in a lengthy declaration by Herr Scheidemann, protesting against the delays of the Conference and indicating that the German Government was once more accepting the Allied terms for the renewal of the Armistice because it assumed that the Conference was about to make a serious effort to bring the state of war to an end by the conclusion of a treaty of peace.³⁸

CHAPTER XI

PRELIMINARY PEACE?

THE first article of its Rules of Procedure declared that the Conference, which was usually styled 'The Preliminary Peace Conference', had been summoned 'to lay down the conditions of peace, in the first place by peace preliminaries and later by a definitive Treaty of Peace',¹ thus showing that the conception of a preliminary settlement of major issues, which had been dominant in November, still formed part of the background to the negotiations. After the arrangement of such preliminaries it was generally supposed that the Conference would admit enemy delegates and thus transform itself into a Congress, this idea being in the mind of M. Vandervelde, for example, when on 5th February he asked the other members of the International Labour Commission whether the proposed I.L.O. was to be set up by 'la Conférence actuelle des Alliés' or by 'le Congrès de la Paix'.² During the first month of its existence the Conference seemed to have lost sight of its declared objective, but in February the idea of a preliminary peace was once more to the fore.

The preceding chapter has shown how the idea of a final naval and military settlement came to be associated with the idea of a preliminary peace, for such a settlement would, as Mr. Balfour put it on 22nd February, form 'an important instalment of the Preliminary Peace',³ and almost inevitably the decision to present naval and military terms at an early date raised the question of the preparation and presentation of other terms of equal importance. Though the question of procedure had not been faced by the Supreme Council, there must have been in the background a vague feeling that, if the naval and military terms were to be presented in the form of a treaty of peace, they must be accompanied by other terms of equal value, M. Clemenceau's hesitations on the 12th being in all probability based upon an unexpressed feeling of this kind.⁴ The admirals had shown, moreover, that a satisfactory naval and military settlement could hardly be arrived at unless such related issues as those affecting Heligoland and the Kiel Canal were taken into account.⁵ Certainly we find that the decision of 12th February to expedite the preparation

of naval and military terms, with a view to their early presentation to the enemy, had hardly been arrived at before there were moves to hasten the preparation of other terms of equal importance, and the unexpected delay in the preparation of the report of the Foch Committee facilitated this process. That these developments should take place during the absence of President Wilson was perhaps unfortunate, but this was not by any design, and it could hardly have been expected that the natural development of the Conference should be arrested until his return.

Before any examination of the February moves for a preliminary peace is undertaken, however, it is necessary that certain guiding facts should be borne in mind. First, as the British Foreign Office Memorandum already quoted⁶ stated very clearly, there could be but one treaty of *peace*, preliminary or otherwise, as between any two States. Secondly, the members of the Council of Ten were not at the time thinking in legal terms or of procedural issues and were far from clear as to the exact meaning of the terms they used. Mr. Balfour's remark about an 'instalment' of a preliminary peace shows that very clearly, for peace cannot be restored by instalments. 'It is a question of an armistice then?' queried Mr. Strauss in the Financial Drafting Committee on 20th February. 'Or of preliminaries of peace, I don't know which,' replied M. Klotz. Neither, it would seem, did anybody else. Uncertainty as to whether procedure should be by way of armistice convention or by preliminaries of peace was matched by complete lack of definite ideas concerning such preliminaries. 'The whole question of some kind of a preliminary treaty as distinct from a treaty which was *not* preliminary,' writes Mr. D. H. Miller, 'was a fog in the minds of nearly everybody who was talking about it'.⁸ This fog was very largely due to a failure to distinguish clearly between '*Préliminaires de paix*', which might be merely 'preliminaries to peace', and an actual preliminary peace treaty. The very title of the Conference, which was styled 'Preliminary', introduced another element of confusion, for there was a natural tendency to think of anything issuing from it as being necessarily preliminary.

As a result of his contact with the Germans at Trier on the occasion of the renewal of the Armistice on 16th February, Marshal Foch appears to have come to the conclusion that at this juncture the enemy could easily be compelled to accept not only a final military settlement but also any other terms the Allies

might present, and his opinion, being passed on to the British military representatives, reached Mr. Lloyd George, then absent from Paris.⁹ On the 18th Foch set forth his general views in the form of a memorandum,¹⁰ which, having been passed on to Colonel House, was by him cabled to President Wilson on the following day.¹¹ This began with a statement of the immediate position and declared: 'The Entente, in its present favourable military situation, can obtain acceptance of any peace conditions it may put forward, provided that they are presented without much delay.'¹² The document went on to outline a plan for the immediate settlement of Germany's frontiers in the west, east and south, and of first instalments to be paid under the heading of Reparations, and this was linked with a scheme for a 'cordon sanitaire' to check the westward spread of Bolshevism. It ended with a definite statement of purpose: 'To sum up, we propose to bring about an immediate and summary settlement with Germany. It will allow us to consider how we shall deal with eastern Europe, which we propose to do at once.'¹³ At the same juncture, acting apparently upon the instructions of Clemenceau, Tardieu prepared his memorandum dealing with French policy concerning the Rhineland.¹⁴ Obviously the French leaders thought that the psychological moment had arrived for pressing their most vital claims.

Meanwhile Mr. Lansing, Colonel House and Mr. Balfour were moving to speed up the working of the Conference and to get it to deal with issues affecting a settlement with Germany. Mr. Lansing desired to bring about such a settlement at an early date, and, just before Wilson's departure for the United States, he handed to the President a list of items for inclusion. These were: (a) the restoration of official relations; (b) the conditional restoration of commercial and financial relations; (c) a German renunciation of all territorial rights outside Europe; (d) frontiers; (e) reparations; (f) German property and territory to be held temporarily as security; (g) a resolution establishing the general principle of a League of Nations.¹⁵ Colonel House, who had always favoured the early conclusion of a treaty with Germany, now felt that the time was ripe for a further move in that direction, and he also spoke to President Wilson of the matter on the 14th.¹⁶ Though the latter's attitude seems to have been entirely non-committal, both Lansing and House continued to advocate their policy during the next few weeks.

Mr. Balfour and Colonel House had a long conversation on the subject on the 16th, and the two men came to a general understanding with regard to speeding up the work of the Conference, Balfour agreeing to approach the Japanese in order to enlist their support, and House proposing to get into touch with the Italians. On the 18th M. Clemenceau told the Council of Ten that he found the selection of the agenda for their next consideration a matter of some difficulty and he asked them to agree to hold no meeting on the following day, giving as his particular reason a desire for leisure to think over the problem of Russia.¹⁷ The next day occurred the attempt to assassinate the French Premier, which not only resulted in the further postponement of the next meeting of the Council until the Friday, 21st February, but also inevitably tended to retard the developments then in progress. 'It is a great misfortune that Clemenceau should have been shot at this time,' wrote Colonel House in his Diary for the 19th, adding, rather naively, 'He had come to our way of thinking that it was best to make a quick and early peace with Germany'.¹⁸ M. Clemenceau was, however, able to receive Mr. Balfour, apparently on the 21st, and there was an important conversation, M. Pichon also being present.¹⁹ The same day Mr. Balfour informed the Council of Ten of his intention to circulate that evening a resolution on the general conduct of business for discussion at the next day's meeting, adding that 'the time had now come to take a survey of the immediate task of the Conference'.²⁰ Colonel House also had an interview with M. Clemenceau, apparently before the Council meeting on the 22nd, and afterwards cabled an account to President Wilson: 'He thinks the entire terms should be given at once and that the military terms should not be made now as at first planned.'²¹

When the Council of Ten met on the afternoon of 22nd February, it had before it the text of the Balfour resolution, which declared in its opening section that it was 'desirable to consider without delay other preliminary Peace Terms with Germany'.²² In moving the resolution Mr. Balfour reported on his discussion with M. Clemenceau, stating that the latter was against the conclusion of a separate military agreement with Germany because he feared that its being effected would delay the preparation of other terms by removing the stimulus, and M. Pichon confirmed this as the view not only of M. Clemenceau but also of Marshal Foch. Colonel House gave strong support to Mr.

Balfour, maintaining that the work now in contemplation should have been started in the previous November because delay favoured the enemy, and expressed the view that the Germans should have before them all the essentials of the peace settlement when they were confronted with the military terms.

At this point Baron Sonnino intervened to declare Italian opposition to any open decision to give priority to terms affecting Germany over those affecting the interests of Italy in the area once under the rule of the Habsburgs, and to M. Pichon's later remark that the German problems should be considered first, as they constituted the 'principal and essential question', he replied, 'For you!'²³ Mr. Balfour then revised the wording of his resolution so that it called for the speeding up of the preparation of preliminary terms on the same lines for all enemy countries, but added a clause expressing the desirability of not holding up the conclusion of a treaty with Germany because terms affecting the other enemy States might not be ready. This redrafting did not satisfy Baron Sonnino, however, for, though he was in practice ready to admit the eventual priority of German questions if these should prove to be 'ripe for solution first',²⁴ he was not prepared to accept any advance recognition of that priority. As a way out of the difficulty, Mr. Lansing suggested that they should agree to proceed on exactly similar lines in the case of each enemy State, and eventually this plan was accepted, it being decided that four resolutions of similar text, applicable to Germany, Austria-Hungary, Turkey and Bulgaria respectively, should be circulated that evening for consideration at their next meeting.

Accordingly, when the Council of Ten met on the afternoon of Monday, 24th February, the texts of the four separate but practically identical resolutions were before it, the opening section of each of these expressing the agreement of the Council that it was 'desirable to proceed without delay to the consideration of preliminary peace terms with . . . and to press on the necessary investigations with all possible speed'.²⁵ M. Pichon was in favour of the principle behind these words but objected to the phraseology, stating that there had been considerable criticism of the use of the words 'preliminary peace terms' and advocating the substitution of 'preliminary conditions'. His objections showed how strong was the tendency at that time, which has been already noted in connection with the military clauses, to think in terms of procedure by way of the Armistice, and he expressly mentioned

his desire to avoid the delay associated with reference to the American Senate before ratification. Mr. Lansing and Mr. Balfour both objected to the proposed alteration, the former pointing out that, had he wished to raise any objection, it would have been to the use of the word 'preliminary', but he did not wish to press this.²⁶ It was agreed to retain the phrase 'preliminary peace terms' in the first section.

The resolutions also set forth the items 'other than the naval, military and air conditions' that were to be included in the four treaties contemplated, these being: (a) 'Approximate future frontiers'; (b) 'Financial conditions to be imposed'; (c) 'Economic conditions to be accorded'; (d) 'Responsibility for breaches of the laws of war'. In the case of Germany only, there was also, coupled with the provision for fixing frontiers, a requirement for the renunciation of colonial territories and treaty rights outside Europe. On the representation of Baron Sonnino this requirement, as far as treaty rights were concerned, was extended to cover the case of Austria-Hungary as well. Into the paragraphs dealing with the items to be covered by the preliminary treaties the words 'inter alia' were inserted on the proposition of Mr. Lansing, and Colonel House tells us that this change was made partly in order to allow for the inclusion of the Covenant of the League of Nations.²⁷ In reply to M. Matsui, Mr. Balfour stated that the phrase would cover the question of German rights in China (though presumably these were already included under the heading of renunciation of extra-European treaty rights), and Mr. Lansing pointed out that they would also cover the repatriation of prisoners of war, which he had intended to raise separately.²⁸

The original resolution circulated by Mr. Balfour on the evening of the 21st had included a statement that the speeding up of the preparation of other terms should be 'without prejudice' to the question of presenting Naval, Military and Air Conditions of Peace at an early date,²⁹ and, in moving it, the Foreign Secretary had explained that in his opinion a separate 'military treaty' could with advantage be concluded. The differing view of M. Clemenceau was quoted, however, and in general the trend of the discussion was towards this view. Colonel House asked if the Council would accept the French conception of procedure, and Mr. Balfour expressed his willingness to fall into line, provided it were the unanimous wish of the Council.³⁰ The 'without

prejudice' clause was actually omitted when the Lansing suggestion of four separate resolutions was adopted, since it was desired that, as far as possible, there should be identical texts applicable to all the enemy States. There was in fact no decision that could be recorded in set terms to abandon all intention to present the military terms separately, but the general impression seems to have been that such a decision had in fact been made. 'Mr. Balfour', we are told, 'thought that a decision had been reached that the Conference should not proceed with the Military Terms of Peace as a separate proposal.'³¹ Colonel House also was definitely of this opinion, for, when on the 23rd he cabled to inform President Wilson of M. Clemenceau's opposition to any priority for the military terms, he added: 'There was afterwards common agreement on this point at our meeting at the Quai d'Orsay.'³²

The discussion of this matter was, however, reopened on the afternoon of the 24th by Lord Milner, who wanted the way left open for the separate presentation of military terms when ready, and support was forthcoming from Baron Sonnino. Marshal Foch, on the other hand, declared his firm opposition to any such procedure because 'whatever military conditions might be imposed on Germany she would still be in a position in due course to reconstitute her army, material means to that end being still available'.³³ He feared that, having arranged a military agreement with the Germans, the British and Americans would hasten their demobilization and that eventually the Allies, when presenting the remainder of their terms, might find themselves facing a reconstituted German army. The discussion on this occasion did little to clarify the actual position for, while M. Pichon suggested that the question was left open by the first words of the second paragraph of the Balfour resolution ('The Preliminary Peace Terms, other than the naval, military and air conditions, shall cover etc.'),³⁴ M. Tardieu and Colonel House argued that the difference was of little practical importance because, though the naval, military and air draft might be ready shortly, the policy they were then adopting would ensure the almost simultaneous appearance of other terms of equal importance.

Further light on the general attitude of the Council of Ten to the procedural issues of the time was given rather indirectly through the debates on the perennial question of General Haller and his troops on the afternoon of the 24th, and again the next

day. Marshal Foch favoured an occupation of Danzig by Allied troops and, since this could not be demanded under the terms of the Armistice, he urged on the 24th the fixing of Germany's eastern frontier (to exclude Danzig, of course). On the 25th he further elaborated this suggestion, advocating the settlement of the question of the Germano-Polish frontier 'at the next meeting with M. Erzberger', and going on to urge the importance of settling with Germany 'in a summary manner by fixing her frontiers and by assessing the sums due on account of indemnities and reparations'.³⁵ Mr. Lansing then intervened to ask Marshal Foch if he meant an immediate entering into a Treaty of Peace with the Germans, and the Marshal replied that he was referring to 'Preliminaries of Peace' which could be and ought to be settled in the case of Germany within a fortnight, similar arrangements with other enemy States to follow as soon as possible. He was, as his further remarks showed, thinking of these settlements as preliminaries to a general assault upon Bolshevism. Colonel House then put to him a definite question as to whether he had in mind the speedy conclusion of a preliminary peace treaty to cover Germany's eastern boundaries as well as other frontiers, military conditions, and terms relating to finance and reparations, the whole to be disposed of simultaneously, and received a definite affirmative reply.³⁶

Mr. Balfour, in recalling the meeting to the real point under discussion—the transport of General Haller's men—and away from the Marshal's 'great plan stretching from the Rhine to Vladivostok',³⁷ suggested that Foch had rather underrated the difficulties of preparing even preliminary terms of peace. Some vital problems, he pointed out, such as those relating to financial questions, the Rhineland and Danzig, could not be settled before the return of President Wilson. Other problems, e.g., Franco-German and Germano-Danish frontiers and Germany's eastern frontier apart from the Danzig region, could probably be brought within reach of a settlement during the President's absence. No steps could be taken, however, before the reports of the various committees came in, and there would probably be a week for the study of these before Wilson's arrival. The actual conclusion of a treaty even of a preliminary nature could hardly be expected before the end of March at the earliest.³⁸

There was not at any time any possibility that the terms of a preliminary treaty other than the military might be settled and

presented to the Germans during the President's absence. Wilson was, of course, quite clear on this point, for he told Mr. Lansing on 14th February that all decisions would be deferred,³⁹ and, when Colonel House, on the same day, outlined a plan to 'button up everything during the next four weeks', seemed 'startled and even alarmed', so that the Colonel had to explain 'that the plan was not actually to bring these matters to a final conclusion but to have them ready for him to do so when he returned'.⁴⁰ When, a few days later, House cabled to Wilson details of the ideas of Marshal Foch at this stage, the President replied: 'I am willing to have the strictly military and naval terms promptly decided and presented to the Germans. I am not willing to have anything beyond the military and naval terms, and believe that the Conference [*sic*] of Ten would be going very much beyond its powers to attempt anything of the sort.'⁴¹ The statesmen left behind in Paris, who were attempting to accelerate the speed of working of the Conference, were not, however, as has been shown, contemplating decisions during President Wilson's absence, and the latter had expressly stated before his departure that 'he did not wish that during his unavoidable absence such questions as the territorial question and questions of compensation should be held up'.⁴²

The suggestion of a plot behind the back of Wilson⁴³ would seem to have not the slightest basis, indeed anything so definite would imply far greater clarity of thought on procedural issues than existed in Paris at the time. The only change after the President's departure was in the direction of delaying the presentation of the naval and military terms until others were ready, and this can hardly be raised to the level of a matter of principle, especially as there was never any final decision on the subject, and, the report of the Foch committee being delayed unexpectedly, the issue could not be put to the test before Wilson's return. No evidence has been produced connecting this delay with the attempt to hasten the preparation of other terms, and the paths, either to a separate military agreement or to a wider preliminary treaty of peace, were as open when the President returned as they had ever been.

As noted above, Mr. D. H. Miller has given cogent reasons for the view that any separate presentation of military terms must in practice have been by way of an armistice convention rather than by a treaty of peace,⁴⁴ and it is here contended that, at this rather

late hour in the history of the Conference, a separate military agreement of this kind was the only kind of 'preliminary treaty' possible. A wider agreement, which, through the inclusion of other vital clauses, might constitute a preliminary treaty *of peace*, was not really in sight at the moment, for, in spite of the phraseology of the resolutions adopted by the Council of Ten on the 24th, the February moves were towards a general speeding up of all the work in hand. The real opportunity to make a preliminary treaty of peace went by in November, and, though the Conference assembled in January ostensibly for the purpose of preparing such a treaty, the development of its organization and procedure was not along those lines. By the end of February it was probably too late to change the whole direction of the Conference and to adapt its machinery for the purpose; the resolutions of the 24th were certainly not sufficient to bring about such a change.

The third paragraph of each of these resolutions provided that, in general, the subordinate bodies that had been appointed by the Conference were to furnish reports by Saturday, 8th March,⁴⁵ and clearly, in so far as this decision had effective results, it would hasten the preparation of such portions of the settlement as the League Covenant and the scheme for an I.L.O., equally with that of the portions dealing with Reparations, War Guilt, etc. There was no general provision for the prior presentation of reports on matters such as were deemed suitable for inclusion in a preliminary as distinct from a comprehensive treaty, such priority being prescribed only in the cases of bodies established since 15th February. As this latter provision would cover only the committees dealing with Yugoslav, Albanian and Danish Affairs, it is apparent that the conclusion of any preliminary treaty, with Germany at any rate, would hardly be appreciably facilitated by it. When, on 1st March, the Council of Ten decided to set up commissions to deal with Finance and Economics, these were also required to present reports 'on all matters which it is necessary to include in the preliminaries of peace' by the 15th,⁴⁶ but the delayed establishment of these bodies until the 10th made this provision of little value.

In one case only was there any really significant change, this being when the very important question of the frontier between Germany and Poland, which (such had been the amazingly haphazard development of the organization at Paris) had not previously been specifically referred to any committee, was on

26th February referred to the Polish Liaison Committee for a report by 8th March.⁴⁷ With the exception of the Central Territorial Committee, established on the 27th, there were no fresh creations in the sphere of general organization to mark the change of outlook at the centre, and thus, in spite of Mr. Balfour's emphasis upon the essentials for a preliminary treaty, only the Naval, Military and Air Committee, the Polish Committee and the War Guilt Commission were at this stage effectively grappling with those essentials. No effective moves were made, nor could be made, before the return of President Wilson, to deal with such problems as those affecting the Rhineland, the Saar or even Reparations. There was a Reparations Commission, it is true, but that body was floundering without adequate guidance from the Supreme Council, and when, just at this very time, it asked for more precise instructions, it was informed that such could not be given at the moment, Colonel House having pointed out during the discussion in the Council of Ten on 1st March that they must await the return of Wilson.⁴⁸

The Balfour initiative, it would then appear, was not calculated to bring about the conclusion of the preliminary peace that was its ostensible aim. Indeed, even if we regard the new policy merely as designed to produce a general speeding up of the work of the Conference, we may easily exaggerate its effects, for, having passed the resolutions of 22nd February, the Council of Ten appears to have taken no effective steps to ensure that they should have definite results. Requests for reports to be in by 8th March were sent out merely in a routine manner from the General Secretariat to the chairmen of the various bodies concerned, there being no effort to stress the urgency of the matter. In several instances the work had already been divided among sub-committees, which were not working in such a way as to produce results in accordance with the new time-table of the Council of Ten, and yet the chairmen were not urged to summon immediate plenary meetings of the commissions, etc., to take stock of the position in the light of new requirements.

Our full information as to the working of the General Commissions of the Conference indicates that the real effect of the February policy on the subordinate bodies as a whole may have been very slight. When the Balfour suggestions were adopted, the League Commission was not in session, having adjourned after producing the provisional draft of the Covenant, and no further

activities were possible until after the return of President Wilson. The International Labour Commission was meeting regularly in plenary session during the last week of February, but not until the morning of the 28th did it receive the request from the Conference Secretariat that it should report by 8th March, and Mr. Barnes at once declared that they were not among those for whom the communication was intended.⁴⁹ That same afternoon the Commission adjourned until 11th March.

The request from the General Secretariat does not appear to have been formally brought to the notice of the War Guilt Commission as a whole, and, though M. Tardieu reminded the first sub-commission on 24th February of the need to produce something by 8th March, and Dr. J. B. Scott gave a similar hint to the 3rd sub-commission on 25th February,⁵⁰ plenary sessions were not resumed until 12th March, four days after the time fixed by the Council of Ten for the receipt of reports. The Reparations Commission, though it had established sub-commissions, was still meeting in plenary session at this time, but there appears to have been no definite move as the result of the request for acceleration. At the plenary meeting of 11th March, Mr. Hughes from the chair, which he was occupying as Vice-President, mentioned casually that he had just been informed by Mr. Baruch, who obviously had the Financial and Economics Commissions in mind, that, in accordance with a decision of the Council of Ten, all reports were to be in by the following Saturday, 15th March.⁵¹ The Commission nevertheless adjourned *sine die* to await reports from the sub-commissions, and there was no further plenary meeting until 7th April.

Though the Council of Ten decided to set up the Financial and Economics Commissions on 1st March, the difficulties arising from the revolt of the States of Latin America delayed a final settlement of the membership of the new bodies until the 10th, so that only five days remained before interim reports were due. The first full meeting of the Financial Commission was in fact held actually on the 15th, and, though on the proposition of Mr. Keynes it appointed as its first sub-commission a body almost identical with the Commission as a whole to consider questions connected with preliminaries of peace,⁵² it was far behind its scheduled time. The Economics Commission did indeed elect its officers and appoint sub-commissions on 7th March⁵³ before the representatives of the Small Powers took their places, but there was no

report from the Commission until the last week of April. The work of the Aviation Commission did not begin until 17th March, its composition not having been decided upon by the Supreme Council until the 15th,⁵⁴ and no time seems to have been fixed for the presentation of its report, perhaps because the Council had by then come to realize that such limits were useless.

The only commission which responded, though rather tardily, to the new policy of the Council of Ten and changed its whole direction was, as has been previously indicated, that dealing with Ports, Waterways and Railways. At the time of the Balfour resolution the two sub-commissions, the 'Committee of Ten' and the 'Committee of Nine', were meeting, and Signor Crespi, as President of the Commission, told the Committee of Ten on the 24th that he wanted the plenary meetings to be resumed the next week in response to the appeal of 'les hauts dirigéants de la Conférence'.⁵⁵ Formal notification of the receipt of a letter from the General Secretariat, containing details of the resolution passed by the Council of Ten on 24th February, was given to the Committee of Nine at its meeting of 1st March,⁵⁶ and Signor Crespi announced that he proposed to call a plenary meeting of the Commission for the following Tuesday, 4th March, so that general procedure might be discussed. The Committees of Ten and Nine were, accordingly, wound up, and the Commission resumed in plenary session as Crespi had said, abandoning the preparation of a general convention and concentrating upon the more immediate task of preparing clauses for inclusion in a treaty of peace.⁵⁷ Even so, the first report of the Commission was not ready before the beginning of April.

Perhaps the most appropriate comment upon the February attempt of the Council of Ten to speed up the working of the Conference was supplied by the facetious Mr. Hughes, who is reported in the French record as having thus delivered himself to the Reparations Commission on 11th March: 'Sans vouloir en quoi que ce soit manquer de respect envers le Comité des Dix, je ne puis m'empêcher de me rappeler l'homme qui voulait évoquer les esprits de la profondeur des nuits et à qui l'on répondait: vous pouvez les évoquer mais je ne sais pas s'ils viendront. Le Comité des Dix demande les rapports pour samedi: seront-ils prêts? Je n'en sais rien.'⁵⁸

The phraseology which maintained the fiction that the Conference was engaged upon the preparation of preliminaries of

peace, though quite meaningless by the early days of March, was nevertheless still used for some time, and as late as 15th April the Germans obviously were of the opinion that a preliminary treaty was to be arranged.⁵⁹ By the end of April, however, there was belated official recognition of the true facts of the case, reflected in statements such as one in the supplementary report of the Ports, Waterways and Railways Commission, dated 25th April, to the effect that amendments of the original report were necessary because 'it seemed that the text of these Articles would have to be inserted no longer in the mere Preliminaries but in the actual Treaty of Peace'.⁶⁰

CHAPTER XII

THE LAST DAYS OF THE COUNCIL OF TEN

THERE was, as the last chapter has shown, very little chance of the early conclusion of any general treaty of peace, preliminary or otherwise, as a result of the efforts made by the Council of Ten in the last days of February to accelerate the progress of the Conference. Only in the military sphere was there any definite approach to finality and even here there were unexpected delays.

In the first place, the report of the Naval, Military and Air Committee, far from being ready within forty-eight hours, as had first been suggested, was not circulated until the last day of February and did not come before the Supreme War Council until Monday, 3rd March, when no decision was possible, chiefly because Mr. Balfour wanted time to consult with the British military experts concerning some of the issues raised, and also, it would seem, because of the absence of Mr. Lloyd George.¹

Secondly, it was found that there had not been sufficient co-ordination between the three groups of experts, which had worked independently despite the precise instructions to the contrary given on 12th February. While the arrival of Mr. Lloyd George was being awaited the Committee was instructed to meet again for the purpose of co-ordination.

Thirdly, there was a very serious difference of principle concerning the retention or abolition of compulsory military service in Germany, which arose when the co-ordinated draft was presented in the presence of the British Premier on 6th March.² This conflict prevented the immediate settlement of the military issues, and the clauses of the naval section which related to the Kiel Canal and submarine cables were reserved for future consideration after examination by *ad hoc* committees. Not until agreed principles for the military draft, involving the placing of the German armed forces upon a voluntary long-service basis, had been settled outside the Council by Mr. Lloyd George and M. Clemenceau on the morning of 7th March, and pushed through the Council at the afternoon meeting, despite sharp protests from Marshal Foch and General Degoutte,³ was any further progress possible. The draft military clauses were then

referred back to the experts for revision in the light of the new decision.

Fourthly, there was further inevitable delay while the text was referred to the Central Drafting Committee, reinforced by four leading military experts, which on 10th March was instructed to present a revised text of all naval, military and air clauses by the 12th.⁴

Fifthly, there was additional delay because the air clauses were in fact not ready for the Drafting Committee at the same time as the others, not being considered in detail by the Supreme War Council until the 12th. Even then the question of the control of civil aviation in Germany after the conclusion of peace was reserved pending examination by the newly established Aviation Commission.⁵

Sixthly, the committees dealing with the problems of the Kiel Canal and submarine cables were rather late in presenting their reports, in spite of a request from the Supreme War Council on 10th March that they should hasten their work.⁶ In fact, only at the last minute was the Drafting Committee acquainted with the conclusions of the Submarine Cables Committee, whose report had not then been circulated.

Finally, there was additional delay because President Wilson, who had returned to Paris on the previous day, and who was expected to be present at the meeting of the Supreme War Council on 15th March, sent a last-minute message to the effect that he was not ready to discuss the naval, military and air draft.⁷ Thus the plenipotentiaries and experts gathered in full force at the Quai d'Orsay that Saturday afternoon found themselves unable to transact anything but routine business, much to the annoyance of Mr. Lloyd George and Sir Henry Wilson.⁸ It was not until Monday, 17th March, more than a month after the decision of the Supreme War Council in favour of the preparation of final naval, military and air terms, that the work of the Foch Committee, in a state approaching completion, was before that Council.⁹

During the whole of the period of unexpected delay the procedural issue was in abeyance, and this fact affected the working of the Naval, Military and Air Committee, which was consequently left without guidance from the Supreme War Council on a most important point. Thus the experts did not know whether the clauses that they were preparing were to be presented in the form of a final armistice convention or as part

of a treaty of peace. This was evident when the first report of the Committee was presented to the Council on 3rd March, for, while the military members had prepared clauses that were to be legally binding upon the Germans in perpetuity, the naval members had drafted restrictions that were not thus to be permanent and the aeronautical members had worked on the supposition that they were primarily concerned with an interim period that would be terminated by the conclusion of a general peace settlement. Mr. Balfour expressed the matter well by pointing out that the Committee was in effect proposing to say to the Germans: 'Here are aerial terms to last a short time, naval terms to endure for perhaps a generation, and military terms to last until the Day of Judgement.'¹⁰ In an attempt to clarify the position the Council discussed the question of the meaning to be attached to the word 'final' in the resolution of 12th February by which the Committee had been established, and it transpired that, while Marshal Foch and the military had sought an interpretation in the report of the discussions preceding the adoption of the resolution by the Supreme Council, the naval members who had not been furnished with the minutes for 12th February had been obliged to take note only of the wording of the resolution as it stood.¹¹ Lord Milner at this point contended that the Council should at once give some general ruling on the subject, but this was not done.

Therefore, when the co-ordinated draft of the naval and military clauses was presented by Admiral Wemyss and Marshal Foch to the Council on Thursday, 6th March, a certain amount of confusion still existed. Thus a discussion arose concerning one of the naval clauses, forbidding German use of certain wireless stations until the conclusion of a 'final' treaty, and the Council again avoided the question of procedure in order to concentrate upon the matters of principle involved. The decision was to reserve all questions concerning the duration and number of treaties for future consideration by the Council, and meanwhile all such qualifying adjectives as 'final' were to be omitted.¹² The continuing indecision as to procedure was shown by the instruction to the Drafting Committee to furnish a complete and revised text of a 'Convention containing all military, aerial and naval terms of a Preliminary Peace with Germany', the word 'convention' being used instead of the word 'treaty' on the suggestion of M. Clemenceau.¹³

The question as to the form in which the terms then under consideration should be presented to the enemy for signature was again raised by the fourth article of the aerial draft that came before the Supreme War Council on 12th March, for this article prohibited the manufacture of all aeroplane parts in Germany 'until the signature of the definitive treaty of peace'.¹⁴ If this clause was to be inserted in a general treaty of peace its phraseology was meaningless, for it was making provision for a duration of time that would not exist. In answer to Baron Sonnino, Mr. Lansing, who had raised the question and who all along had shown a firmer grasp of procedure than many of his colleagues, expounded his views on the subject. On a previous occasion he had objected to the use of the word 'preliminary' as applied to the peace treaty for which they were preparing,¹⁵ and he now expressed his opinion that the 'Aerial Convention' then under discussion should be inserted in a general treaty ending the state of war and covering questions of frontiers and reparations and, indeed, everything of importance. Any subsequent treaty would be only to deal in greater detail with questions already covered in outline. In the sphere of aviation he did not see that anything could be left over for a second and more detailed treaty of this kind.

A preliminary treaty of peace with Germany, containing only such portions of the ultimate settlement as were deemed most vital, was, in fact, impossible, because there was no prospect that, apart from the military sphere, these portions would be ready in advance of the general body of terms. Only the naval, military and air clauses were likely to be ready soon and they alone could hardly constitute a treaty of peace. Only by their presentation in the form of a final armistice convention could there have been any kind of a preliminary settlement with Germany at this time.

When the revised naval, military and air draft, as issuing from the Drafting Committee, came before the Supreme War Council at its meeting on Monday, 17th March, President Wilson now being present, the procedural issue was forced to the front at once, M. Fromageot of the Drafting Committee asking for a definite ruling as to the exact legal form which the draft under consideration was to take.¹⁶ Was it to form part of a final armistice convention or to be set aside for later inclusion in a general treaty of peace? These were the only practical alternatives at the time.

There can be no doubt as to the possibility of presentation in the form of a convention. The draft itself bore witness to the existence of such an idea in the wording of its forty-eighth article, which ran thus: 'The Armistice of the 11th November, 1918, and the Conventions subsequent thereto, remain in force as far as they are not inconsistent with the present stipulations.'¹⁷ President Wilson himself explained to the Supreme War Council his own previous belief that the naval, military and air draft was to take the form of a 'preliminary convention', stating his assumption that this 'would only be temporary until the complete treaty was prepared, and that it would have the character of a sort of exalted armistice, the terms being re-included in the formal treaty'.¹⁸ Such an armistice agreement could indeed have been drafted, with clauses binding Germany to accept for the future the naval and military terms therein set forth, and not necessarily such terms alone. The War Responsibility Commission, for example, had, as we have seen, discussed the desirability and possibility of enforcing the handing over of selected 'war criminals' on the renewal of the Armistice, and also it had contemplated at the same time securing from the enemy a definite recognition of the competence of the International Tribunal that was to be set up to try the accused.¹⁹

The American legal experts, Dr. J. B. Scott and Mr. D. H. Miller, being requested by Mr. Lansing on the evening of the 17th, after the discussion at the Quai d'Orsay,²⁰ gave an opinion on the subject of procedure, which was, on the following day, embodied in a memorandum written by Dr. Scott and signed by both experts.²¹ This definitely allowed for the power of the President, as Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces of the United States, to conclude any kind of armistice convention without reference to the Senate, precedents of 1813, the Mexican War and the Spanish-American War being quoted. The McKinley precedent at the close of this last-named war was of especial interest, because it showed how far an armistice convention might in reality anticipate the terms of a future treaty of peace.

The fact is, however, that at this late hour the Supreme War Council does not seem to have considered seriously the presentation of even the military terms in the form of a final armistice agreement. This is the more surprising in view of the fact that consideration of problems of the existing Armistice had been the

primary factor leading to the decision of the Council to hasten the preparation of final naval, military and air terms. The Armistice had been renewed unchanged in February only on the understanding that the final terms would soon be ready for presentation, and M. Clemenceau had been persuaded to consent to this procedure only because he was assured that the absence of President Wilson need not delay the preparation of those terms. When, after unexpected delay, the naval, military and air draft was ready for discussion, both M. Clemenceau and Marshal Foch had pressed for the early presentation of its terms to the Germans. The Premier had urged this policy immediately on his return to the Supreme Council on Saturday, 1st March,²² and on the following Monday, 3rd March, the Marshal had urged that a quick decision was vital because the Allied plan of demobilization fixed 1st April as the date after which they might no longer be in a position to impose their will upon Germany. Foch then wanted the presentation of the terms to the enemy not later than 20th March,²³ though he appears to have assumed that other terms beside the military would also be ready. One might have supposed, therefore, that by the 17th the necessity would be regarded as urgent.

To some extent, as has been shown, the idea of the separate presentation of military terms had been blurred by the moves of the last week of February, though the way to such presentation had never been definitely barred and, much to Mr. Balfour's surprise, Clemenceau, on his return, seemed to be ready for such procedure, while he appeared to desire an early and almost simultaneous presentation of other vital sections of the peace settlement. Mr. Balfour, however, having in February abandoned his earlier idea of leaving open the way to prior presentation of the military terms, in deference to the supposed views of the then absent Clemenceau, seems in March to have regarded this change as irrevocable. The question of presenting military terms, he declared on 1st March, was no longer connected in any way with the Armistice.

It was because of this change of emphasis during his absence that President Wilson had to concern himself on his return with the American Constitution. Apparently assuming that the Supreme Council now had a preliminary treaty of peace in mind, he told the members of that Council on 17th March that he was in some considerable difficulty as to the necessity of submission

to the Senate and must consult his constitutional lawyers.²⁴ Mr. Lansing seems to have assumed, quite erroneously, that the President had the impression that a preliminary treaty need not necessarily be submitted to the Senate for ratification, for that is how he put the matter to Scott and Miller, stating his own astonishment at such an idea.²⁵ The opinion of the legal experts on this point was of course conclusive. The status of war could not be changed into the status of peace as far as the United States was concerned, except by means of a treaty duly ratified by the Senate. This decisive opinion, according to Mr. Lansing's own impressions, recorded at the end of March, caused the President to abandon any idea of a preliminary treaty.²⁶

This was surely flogging a dead horse with a vengeance, for as Mr. Miller has contended convincingly,²⁷ President Wilson had all the time been thinking in terms of armistice procedure, and, while a separate military treaty *of peace* was unthinkable, a wider preliminary treaty was impossible with vital issues such as those affecting the Rhineland and the Saar unsettled. The President's conception of 'a sort of exalted armistice' was perfectly feasible, as the lawyers allowed, but Mr. Lansing did not stress this, and Wilson seems just to have abandoned the idea.

This abandonment of the idea of any early presentation of military terms, which in effect meant that there would be no negotiations with Germany until the whole treaty draft was presented in May, marks a turning-point in the story of the Conference, and must demand fuller explanation as fuller information is available. Legal difficulties may have had something to do with it. M. Fromageot pointed out to the Supreme War Council on 17th March that, though a clause might be inserted into an armistice convention binding the Germans to accept a repetition of its terms in a subsequent peace treaty, the enemy might nevertheless consider them open to fresh discussion when the treaty was presented.²⁸ It is to be noted also that the Germans themselves did not favour procedure by way of the Armistice Commission, for their Government transmitted through General Nudant a note on the matter, which came before the Supreme Council on 11th March. 'If, as stated by the press,' it ran, 'the approaching discussions are intended to take the character of preliminaries of peace and to prescribe, for instance, the military and naval terms of peace, Wako (of the German Armistice Commission) will not be qualified to deal with them. That would .

have to be done by a commission presided (over) by Brockdorff-Rantzau. You are requested, therefore, to give sufficient notice in order that the competent commission may arrange to come to the meeting-place.'²⁹

These slight legal obstacles were, however, by no means of a prohibitive kind and are very inadequate as explanations. In the absence of fuller information one can indeed but assume that by the middle of March the military situation, in spite of Allied demobilization, ceased to give cause for alarm. The fear of the German army as a possibly effective fighting force must have gone, probably because of the general disintegration of the German forces after their orderly return home, and the German surrender of the mercantile marine early in March, coupled with the settlement of the problem of General Haller's Polish legion at the end of the month, must have given greater stability to the situation. The advance of Bolshevism into central Europe was now to be the main cause of anxiety.

By the middle of March, just over two months after the opening of the Conference, that preliminary treaty of peace which was still supposed to be its goal had in reality passed beyond the bounds of possibility. Work upon those branches of the peace settlement that were not necessarily appropriate for a preliminary treaty had by that time progressed far in advance of the work upon the major problems that must be dealt with in any treaties of peace with Germany and her allies, and the effective treating of those problems was now to be the all-important task of the Supreme Council. That body, in the form of the Council of Ten and the Supreme War Council, had thus far signally failed, except in the naval, military and air sphere, to get to grips with the major issues, and even in that sphere its work was incomplete. The article of the naval draft concerning the Kiel Canal had been referred back to the *ad hoc* committee for reconsideration,³⁰ and not until 24th March was the question of submarine cables apparently decided.³¹ The problem of Heligoland was also reserved for further consideration. No approach had been made to the preparation of naval and military terms for Austria-Hungary, for the Naval, Military and Air Committee, though requested on 13th February to undertake this task, had on 3rd March, on reporting to the Supreme War Council, asked that the whole question should be deferred until the frontiers of the various Succession States had been drawn and there had been a

decision by the Great Powers as to which were to be regarded as enemy States.³²

Public opinion was by this time clearly aware of the lack of real progress at Paris and was becoming impatient. During the early days, in January, there had at least been a great appearance of activity as the general organization was being established in Paris, and the February absences of the leading figures might be accepted as explaining, if not excusing, the continual failure to settle the big outstanding issues. With the return of the leaders in March there came a general demand for an overhauling of the organization of the Conference in such a way as to hasten the production of tangible results. A leading article in the *Paris Daily Mail* on 6th March reflected the general uneasiness, proclaiming delay to be the greatest of all evils, and continuing: 'Any statesman of sound sense and reasonable knowledge who has busied himself with the issues before the Peace Conference during the last two months could sketch in twenty-four hours the main lines of a fair peace settlement. . . . If the Allied statesmen cannot do jointly what most of them could do singly, they had better entrust one of their number with the task and leave him to do it.'

Up to the early days of March the Council of Ten had not even contemplated the handling of major problems other than military, and then, when Marshal Foch urged the importance of an early consideration of Germany's future frontiers, M. Clemenceau emphasized the impossibility of such consideration in the absence of both Mr. Lloyd George and President Wilson.³³ It was not until after the return of the former that the Council of Ten did, on Monday, 10th March, fix a tentative programme for the examination of German frontiers, agreeing to begin discussion of the eastern and northern frontiers on the following day, the 11th, and to continue it on the Thursday, 13th March, while setting down the much more controversial western boundary for discussion on Friday the 14th.³⁴

This programme was not, of course, carried out. There was no discussion of either the eastern or northern frontier on the 11th, and then on the Wednesday M. Clemenceau reported that the Central Territorial Committee had not yet passed upon the first report of the Polish Affairs Committee, further suggesting that the matter be postponed until the Saturday, when President Wilson was expected to be present. This suggestion was accepted,

with the additional proviso, put forward by Mr. Lansing, that M. Clemenceau should call a meeting for the Friday afternoon if the Polish report should be available by then.³⁵ No meeting was in fact called for the Friday, for the discussion either of Germany's eastern frontier or of the western frontier, as originally planned. On Saturday, 15th March, President Wilson did not make his expected reappearance, and discussion of the Germano-Polish frontier was postponed equally with that of the military question, Mr. Clemenceau reporting that 'some of the Powers present' were not ready to discuss.³⁶

Discussion of the naval, military and air draft occupied the whole of the time of the Supreme Council at its meeting on the 17th; there was no meeting on the following day; and so it was not until Wednesday, the 19th, that the report of the Polish Affairs Committee upon the Germano-Polish frontier did actually come before the Council, only to be referred back for reconsideration after a heated discussion.³⁷ This meeting of the 19th was of great importance in the development of the Conference because it demonstrated conclusively that the Council of Ten was completely unsuitable for the discussion of big controversial issues of this kind, affecting the vital interests of the Great Powers. Apart from the direct clash between the British and French representatives and the consequent failure to reach any agreement, there was the most unsatisfactory feature of serious leakages of information concerning what took place, to which reference has been made in an earlier chapter.

Articles, obviously based upon information thus obtained and bitterly critical of the British Premier, having appeared in the Paris press, a special meeting of the Council of Ten was held on the evening of Friday, 21st March, apparently upon his initiative, to consider the matter, and it was then that Mr. Lloyd George made his vehement protest. The Council of Ten could do no more to pacify the angry Premier than to agree to the holding of an inquiry into the leakages and to authorize the issue of a warning from the General Secretariat.³⁸ On the following day, Saturday, 22nd March, when the report of the Polish Committee came back with unanimous reaffirmation, the Council of Ten, probably influenced by what had happened on the 19th, confessed its inability to reach agreement on the questions at issue. It was decided, on the suggestion of Mr. Lloyd George and the actual motion of President Wilson, to receive the report formally and

to reserve it for final examination in connection with the general boundaries of Germany.³⁹

It is surely not surprising in these circumstances that the much bigger issues connected with Germany's western frontier, concerning which, as Mr. Lloyd George has said, there was great anxiety 'to avoid a head-on collision',⁴⁰ were never actually raised at any meeting of the Council of Ten. Even the report of the Danish Affairs Committee on Schleswig, though apparently ready, was never considered by the Council.

In the meantime, however, the solution of the procedural difficulties of the Conference was being found, as it had been during the war years and at the time of the Armistice negotiations, in the development of an inner group. This, being small, was to prove far more suitable for the confidential discussion of the most vital and controversial matters and, through the exclusion of the Japanese, was to correspond more closely with the realities of the situation. The origin of this inner group, which was to develop into the Council of Four, is to be found in the days between the return of Mr. Lloyd George and that of President Wilson, Colonel House then acting as the President's representative. The House Diary gives an account of a conversation at lunch on 6th March between the Colonel and the British Premier, during which they agreed upon the desirability of meetings of the chiefs to 'thresh out everything before the President came and arrive at decisions'.⁴¹

We have knowledge of two important meetings in which M. Clemenceau and Mr. Lloyd George and Colonel House participated, before the President's return. The first of these took place at the French Ministry of War on the morning of Friday, 7th March, when a number of very important topics were touched upon, these including Germany's future military system, the Germano-Polish frontier, Danzig, the Rhineland, Reparations and Russia.⁴² The second meeting was also at the Ministry of War on the morning of Monday, 10th March, and this time the issues under consideration were Reparations, the Rhineland, the Adriatic, Syria, the disposal of German warships, and the need for an Anglo-American naval understanding.⁴³ After his return, President Wilson, now, of course, replacing House, sat with M. Clemenceau and Mr. Lloyd George from three to five o'clock in the afternoon of 14th March in House's room at the Crillon, the subjects under discussion being the Rhineland and

Reparations.⁴⁴ There was another meeting of the 'Three' on the 18th for a further discussion of the Reparations problem.⁴⁵

A noteworthy feature was the early association of Sir Maurice Hankey with this inner group, though he was apparently not present at any of the conversations. Before the meeting of 7th March he, presumably on request, handed to Mr. Lloyd George a list of the principal subjects 'on which action appears to be necessary by the highest authorities'. After the meeting the Premier gave to him an account of the proceedings, which he put into the form of a memorandum, probably the one from which Mr. Lloyd George quotes in his book.⁴⁶ Sir Maurice then got into touch with Mr. Auchincloss and Admiral Wemyss with regard to matters arising, and would appear to have been already acting as an unofficial secretary to the chiefs.

At one stage it seemed as though the inner group might provide that steering committee which had been so obviously lacking throughout the period of the Council of Ten, and so return to Armistice precedents. Thus at the meeting on the morning of 7th March Mr. Lloyd George produced a rough draft of the plan which he intended to place before the Ten, acting as the Supreme War Council, that afternoon, as an alternative to the proposals of the Military Committee. This British scheme, being approved in principle at this morning meeting, was then carried through the Council in the afternoon in spite of the anger of Marshal Foch and General Degoutte. 'We did our work rapidly,' wrote Colonel House, 'and both Lloyd George and Clemenceau felt encouraged that so much could be done so quickly.' The Colonel then noted that, whereas some issues, not having been previously discussed in this way, took up almost the whole of the afternoon Council meeting, the military question, because of the preliminary understanding, was disposed of quickly. 'It was then agreed,' he continued, 'that we should meet again in a day or two to decide matters before going to the Quai d'Orsay.'⁴⁷

The smaller body was not, however, to continue as a steering committee, for the larger Council was, in fact, moribund, there being constant pressure in favour of drastic changes of organization, especially from the British side.⁴⁸ It would appear that at their meeting of the 10th M. Clemenceau, Mr. Lloyd George and Colonel House came to a tentative agreement to suspend the regular meetings of the Ten on the return of President Wilson. On Wednesday, 12th March, House appears to have suggested

to Clemenceau that on the Friday, the day of President Wilson's return, the usual meeting of the Council of Ten should be abandoned and that a meeting of the Three should take its place.⁴⁹ M. Clemenceau accepted the idea, and that afternoon, on his suggestion, the Council of Ten adjourned until the Saturday, when, as we have seen, it was unable to transact any business of importance because President Wilson was not in his place. From that point the Council of Ten did not meet daily, though it survived for another week.

The Polish report fiasco and the leakages of information clearly demonstrated the weaknesses of the Council of Ten, just at the moment when the continued fighting between the Poles and the Ruthenians and the rise of Bela Kun to power in Hungary emphasized the dangers of delay. Thus at the close of the Saturday meeting of the Council, on 22nd March, it was decided that the Secretary-General should draw up a list of all questions ready for immediate discussion, giving priority to such as concerned '*Preliminaries of Peace with Germany*'.⁵⁰ At the same time it was decided to hold a meeting of the Heads of Governments in private session before the next meeting of the Ten, on the Monday, Marshal Foch to be in attendance for one more discussion of the transfer of the Polish troops from France. It was during the intervening week-end that Mr. Lloyd George and his entourage went to Fontainebleau. Before his departure the Premier told Lord Riddell: 'I am going to Fontainebleau for the week-end and mean to put in the hardest forty-eight hours' thinking I have ever done. The Conference is not going well and I must try to pull things together.'⁵¹

Mr. Lloyd George seems to have come back with a definite feeling that the meetings of the Council of Ten must be ended at once, and President Wilson was very willing, while M. Clemenceau was hardly likely to object. Thus the meeting of the Ten on the Monday afternoon proved to be the last of the series. Some time that day President Wilson told House that the meetings of the Ten were over and that the Heads of Governments were to meet again at 11 a.m. the following day.⁵²

The meeting of the Heads on the afternoon of the 24th, immediately before the last meeting of the Council of Ten series, may be regarded as the first meeting of the Council of Four, Signor Orlando being present.⁵³ The House Diary for 6th March suggests that at that time there was an intention to bring the

Italian Premier at once into the meetings of the inner group,⁵⁴ but this had not been done while the meetings of the Council of Ten continued. It is true that he had been present at a special meeting held on 20th March to consider the partition of Asiatic Turkey, but this must be regarded rather as a gathering of the Council of Ten without the Japanese than as a meeting of the inner group, because it was attended by the Foreign Ministers, M. Pichon, Mr. Balfour and Baron Sonnino, and full minutes were kept.⁵⁵ Signor Orlando took his place with the President and Premiers on the 24th, this being his only possible position if the Council of Ten was to break up.

Thus the Council of Four came into being, and, at last, the Supreme Council of the Great Powers had assumed a form which would enable it to make real and rapid progress. Such progress at any Conference must depend upon suitability of organization and procedure. As at Vienna the settlement of the Saxo-Polish question had not been possible in the days of the Committee of Eight, but had followed upon the establishment of the Committee of Five in January 1815, so at Paris the great problems of Reparations, the Saar, the Rhineland and Danzig, with which the Council of Ten had been unable to deal, were now to be settled by the Council of Four.

CHAPTER XIII

THE COUNCILS OF FOUR AND FIVE

'THE Council of Ten,' wrote Mr. Harold Nicolson, 'has in practice broken up into two bodies. First, the Council of Four (Clemenceau, P.W., L.L.G. and Orlando), and next the Council of Five, composed of the Foreign Ministers. This is the only possible way to get a move on.'¹ Of these two heirs of the Council of Ten the more important by far was the smaller group, whose members were generally known as the 'Big Four'. Concerning the scope and powers of this famous body a section of the Paris press began at once to demand more information than was available, and the student of the development of the Conference is still echoing that cry. Until such fuller knowledge is available it must remain impossible to write about the 'Four' as one can about the 'Ten', but, by piecing together all manner of indirect references and by careful inference, it is possible to present the main outline of the picture.

Annex A of the minutes of the last meeting of the Council of Ten, on the afternoon of 24th March, records, as we have noted, the first meeting of the Council of Four, but does not give it a name,² and the first official use of the title 'Council of Four' would seem to be that in the minutes of the meeting of the Foreign Ministers on 1st April.³ Various other titles of a more precise and less colloquial nature were also used. Thus Sir Maurice Hankey, in his earlier communications to M. Dutasta conveying the decisions of the Heads of Governments, seems to have referred only to the results of 'a meeting between M. Clemenceau, President Wilson, etc.',⁴ but from somewhere about the middle of May he appears to have used regularly the title: 'Council of the Principal Allied and Associated Powers'.⁵ Yet another label was employed in the agenda for the plenary session of the Conference on 28th April, where the Big Four were referred to as the 'Council of First Delegates of the Powers with General Interests'.⁶ This inner cabinet of the Conference was, of course, by whatever name actually known at various times, the Supreme Council of the Great Allied and Associated Powers in a new form.

From this Council, now that it took the form of a gathering

of Heads of Governments, Japan was naturally excluded, and the position of that country reverted to what it had been before the London Conference had ranked her with the other four Powers held to have 'General Interests'. Having her own claims securely buttressed, she had in fact no general interests, the inclusion of her delegates had contributed to the unsatisfactory nature of the Council of Ten, and the new arrangement was much more definitely in accord with the realities of the situation. That the Japanese tended to resent this exclusion, as was indeed most natural, is indicated by an entry made by Colonel House in his Diary on 22nd May after a visit from Baron Makino and Viscount Chinda. 'They say,' he writes, 'it is becoming embarrassing to inform their Government about the happenings of the Conference through newspaper reports. They never know what is going on until they see it printed and that, of course, is only a small part of the proceedings.'⁷

The Italian Premier, though a member of the Council of Four, was always rather out of place at its meetings, partly because of the very specialized interests of Italy and also as a result of his ignorance of the English language. We are told that he was never quite certain that the correct impression was being given in translation and that in consequence, he was often worried as to the way in which things were going.⁸ Count Aldrovandi goes so far as to suggest that one motive leading to the substitution of the Council of Four for that of Ten was a desire to secure Signor Orlando's isolation by separating him from Baron Sonnino.⁹

This isolation of the Italian Premier became very apparent during the discussions concerning the Adriatic problem in the latter half of April, for from 21st April to 6th May the Council of Four as such ceased to exist and the control was in the hands of a Council of Three. For a brief moment, on the morning of the 21st, it was Wilson who occupied a position of isolation, while the Premiers and Foreign Secretaries of the three States which were signatories of the Treaty of London met to endeavour to reach a settlement. They failed, however, and in the afternoon the Supreme Council resumed its meeting without Signor Orlando. Sir Maurice Hankey was sent over to invite the Premier to return to join in the discussions on an agreed basis, but the invitation was rejected, and other negotiations carried on by various intermediaries failed to bring about the reunion of the Big Four at

this juncture. On the afternoon of the 24th Signor Orlando announced his immediately impending departure for Rome, and he did not return to Paris until the time of the presentation of the German Treaty to the enemy delegates in early May. It may indeed be said with a large measure of truth that, not only did the Supreme Council actually take the form of a Council of Three at this important stage of the proceedings, but the same Three always formed an inner group within the larger body. Signor Orlando was increasingly hampered by political difficulties at home, and consequently had to return to Rome for a further period later in May and again towards the end of June, when his ministry suffered defeat. His place at the concluding meeting of the Four was taken by Baron Sonnino.¹⁰

The Council of Four held more than two hundred meetings in a little over three months, its personnel being the same throughout, except for the defections of the Italian Premier, as described above, a short absence of President Wilson through illness from 3rd to 8th April, when his place was taken by Colonel House,¹¹ and the brief visit of Mr. Lloyd George to Westminster for the Commons debate on 16th April. The usual place of meeting was the Hotel Bischoffen, which was President Wilson's residence, after his return from Washington, but occasionally the Four met elsewhere; in M. Clemenceau's room at the French War Office or at the apartment of Mr. Lloyd George in the Rue Nitot. There were usually morning and afternoon meetings every day of the week and the proceedings were always quite informal, the members not being in any way bound by rules or written procedure. President Wilson, we are told by M. Tardieu, who, though not of the Four, 'shared their life . . . closely', discussed 'like a college professor criticizing a thesis, sitting bolt upright in his arm-chair', whereas Mr. Lloyd George 'argued like a sharpshooter', and M. Clemenceau 'proceeded by assertions, weighty, rough-hewn and insistent'.¹² It was at these meetings of the Big Four that the English language, which, though never officially recognized as one of the languages of the Conference, had been freely used in the days of the Council of Ten, definitely established its position as a medium of modern world diplomacy, Signor Orlando being the only member who could not use and understand it.

The famous general picture of an ordinary meeting of the Council of Four by Mr. J. M. Keynes is no longer regarded as entirely accurate,¹³ but the same writer has given us a first-hand

account of an enlarged meeting which he, together with other financial experts, attended. 'The President's advisers would press round him, a moment later the British experts would double across to learn the result or see that all was well, and next the French would be there, a little suspicious lest the others were arranging something behind them, until all the room were on their feet and conversation was general in both languages, . . . the President and Prime Minister as the centre of a surging mob and a babel of sounds.'¹⁴

No secretary had been present at the meetings of the inner group in the last days of the Council of Ten, and there was therefore no direct record of the proceedings. The special meeting of Premiers and Foreign Secretaries on 20th March was an isolated and obvious exception to this rule.¹⁵ It appears, nevertheless, that unofficial notes, of the decisions at least, were made afterwards, and sometimes the trend of the discussions as well was recorded. Thus Mr. Lloyd George tells us that on 7th March he dictated 'Notes of an interview between M. Clemenceau, Colonel House and myself' as soon as he had returned from the conversations.¹⁶ It is to be noted, moreover, that, as the previous chapter has shown, Sir Maurice Hankey was almost from the beginning acting from the outside as an unofficial secretary to the President and Premiers, ensuring that their decisions were followed by the necessary actions, and he continued thus to act after the meetings of the Council of Four proper had begun on 24th March. He was present at the first two meetings of the Council of Foreign Ministers (27th and 28th March), but not subsequently, and this fact may have some significance. On 5th April we have definite evidence of his continuing to act from without as unofficial secretary to the Four in his writing a note requesting that certain action be taken in accordance with decisions then made by the Four concerning Reparations.¹⁷ The Big Four, however, for some time conducted their discussions in the presence of Professor Mantoux alone, and the only direct record of the conversations and decisions was in the form of notes which the interpreter made at the time. Whatever records were made outside after the conversations, were informal and unofficial, as in the early part of March. It has been suggested that this early and very informal period was valuable in that it made possible the separation of the Premiers from the officials and routine that had come to be associated with the Supreme Council

in the days of the Council of Ten,¹⁸ and M. Tardieu praises the Heads of Governments who thus cast themselves adrift from official dossiers and *procès-verbaux*.¹⁹

Despite the obvious benefits of this new-found informality, the Big Four discovered the absence of a secretary from their meetings to be a great inconvenience, for under such conditions there was no official link between the Supreme Council and the Conference as a whole, and, in particular, there was no one to record with complete accuracy the decisions of the Heads and pass them on to the Central Drafting Committee. 'Even the marshalling of their business,' we are told, 'the assembly of the representatives of the nations concerned and of the necessary experts, and the communication of the conclusions to those who had to act on them, were no light tasks.'²⁰ Lord Riddell tells of a conversation on this subject with Sir Henry Wilson, who remarked: 'I have told the Prime Minister that he ought to have Hanky-Panky with him. The trouble is that the Four meet together and think they have decided things, but there is no one to record what they have done. The consequence is that misunderstandings often arise and there is no definite account of their proceedings and nothing happens.'²¹

The period during which the Council of Four conducted its proceedings in this manner lasted, it would seem, for about three weeks,²² and we know that as late as 15th April the Central Drafting Committee found it difficult to get exact details of decisions made by the Four with regard to Heligoland.²³ About that time there was an important change of procedure, Sir Maurice Hankey becoming, perhaps at the suggestion of M. Clemenceau,²⁴ the official secretary to the Council and a regular attendant at all its meetings. His summaries of the trend of the discussions and of the decisions were mimeographed and submitted to the Four, but were not subject to formal approval.

Professor Mantoux continued, of course, to make his own notes for purposes of translation and it may have been partly for this reason that M. Clemenceau never called in a French secretary. President Wilson also accepted Hankey as the only recorder in English, though, as he later declared, if he had ever felt that there was any doubt as to the complete secrecy of the conversations, he would have insisted upon either the continued exclusion of all secretaries or the inclusion of an American.²⁵ Signor Orlando, however, probably because of his ignorance of the

English language, introduced Count Aldrovandi as Italian secretary for the critical discussions of the Adriatic question from 19th to 24th April, and the Count was later present at the June meetings of the Four. He tells us that, unlike Sir Maurice Hankey, he attempted to reproduce the conversations in direct form for, though shorthand was not used, the repetition in translation facilitated this type of reproduction. Moreover, not being in the same official position as Sir Maurice, Aldrovandi did not feel himself to be subject to the same inhibitions, and he maintains that even when the British notes are published in their entirety his own memoranda will still have a complementary value, especially in Italy.²⁶

The formal records of the Council of Four occur in two series. From 19th April to 7th May the minutes were issued as appendices to the 'I.C.' records (which were now of the proceedings of the Foreign Ministers), thus forming the 'I.C. "A"' series. On the 8th May, when the Council had been reconstituted, following the return of the Italians to Paris, there was begun a new series of minutes labelled 'C.F.', and these, if we may judge from the few examples given by Mr. D. H. Miller, resemble very closely the minutes of the Council of Ten.²⁷

Records of the Four, we are told, fill ten large volumes of typescript.²⁸ Concerning them there was an interesting discussion at the last meeting of the Council, on 28th June,²⁹ when Sir Maurice Hankey made known the fact that from various sources he had received requests for copies of portions of his notes, and asked for instructions. President Wilson stoutly maintained that the records were of purely private conversations, and said he had never contemplated the possibility that their details might be divulged even to the foreign departments of the Great Powers. Mr. Lloyd George, while obviously accepting the general requirement of privacy, felt that conversations of such importance could not be kept entirely secret, and Baron Sonnino observed that Signor Orlando had, in all probability, passed on much information to his successor at Rome. The general conclusion was, in spite of President Wilson's contention, that it was impossible to prevent the restricted official use of extracts from the minutes in certain instances.

In the days of the Council of Four the General Secretariat, under M. Dutasta, tended to become a clearing-house for the Conference as a whole. Decisions of the Four were communicated

officially by Hankey to Dutasta, who would then take such action as might be necessary, informing other bodies concerned, etc.³⁰ It is to be noted, however, that Sir Maurice would, at the same time, often short-circuit the General Secretariat and deal directly by note or telephone with the chairmen of committees affected.

Had the Council of Ten remained in existence with the Big Four acting as a steering committee, much of the executive and miscellaneous work would have been carried on by the larger body as before, subject to the ultimate control of the Heads, and it is probable that the Four at first contemplated this procedure. They at once found themselves, however, too busy to attend meetings of the Ten, and the consequent abrupt cessation of these meetings on 24th March created an evident need for some body to take over the general functions of the Ten, while at the same time it meant that the 'second strings' and the Japanese had nothing to do. Thus, very naturally, the Council of Foreign Ministers, or, as the British would have it, the 'Second Eleven', came into being. The first meeting was hastily arranged by the Council of Four at the beginning of its morning's work on Thursday, 27th March, and took place immediately.³¹

Mr. Lansing, we know, was attending a meeting of the War Guilt Commission that morning when he was called away and, evidently not knowing exactly to what kind of a meeting he was being summoned, he explained that he was going to the Quai d'Orsay for a meeting of the 'Conseil Suprême des Puissances'.³² In addition to the American Secretary of State there were also present at this first meeting Mr. Balfour, M. Pichon and Baron Sonnino, but no Japanese delegate, presumably because the initiative came from the Council of Four, on which Japan was not represented. The subject under discussion being a French proposal for the separate revictualling of Bavaria, one must suppose that this had been brought before the Council of Four that morning and that the members had at once realized the need for some body to deal with it. The time of the Premiers being now too fully occupied to permit of their joining in a resumption of full meetings of the Ten for such purposes, the natural decision was to ask the Foreign Ministers to sit separately and to deal with the problem. At the close of their first meeting it was agreed that 'the Foreign Ministers' should meet again on the following day to deal with other urgent business.³³ From that second meeting, on 28th March, Japan was represented.

The new body, which was officially labelled the 'Council of Five' in the minutes for the 16th April,³⁴ and which used the room of M. Pichon for its meetings, did not immediately establish itself as a regular organ, there being no third meeting until the following Tuesday, 1st April, after which there was an interval of a fortnight before the next meeting, on the 15th. From that date meetings were held frequently until 25th June, though they were never as regular as meetings of the Ten had been. There were, if we include the enlarged gatherings to be mentioned later in this chapter, thirty-two meetings in all. M. Pichon presided, and the discussions were of a formal nature, as had been those of the Council of Ten. The personnel was fairly constant, apart from the absence of Baron Sonnino at the end of April and the beginning of May, though Sir Robert Borden once deputized for Mr. Balfour, and Mr. Henry White occasionally replaced Mr. Lansing. Others present on various occasions were Mr. Hoover, M. Tardieu, Lord Robert Cecil and Lord Hardinge.

At the first meeting only Sir Maurice Hankey and Count Aldrovandi were present as secretaries, but American and French secretaries appeared on the second occasion, and all the Great Powers had secretaries present from 1st April onwards, there being, in addition, a Joint Secretariat. The minutes were of exactly the same form as those of the Council of Ten, being prepared and issued in exactly the same way, and the British marked the continuity by inclusion in the 'I.C.' series, though the Americans numbered the minutes of the new body separately in an 'F.M.' series. The interpreter at the first meeting was M. Arnarvon, but from the second meeting onwards it was M. Camerlynck. We have been given the following contemporary picture of the Council at work: 'In afternoon go down to the "Conseil des Cinq", i.e., the subsidiary Supreme Council, of the Foreign Ministers. It is still held in Pichon's office where the old Ten used to sit. It is a scrubby affair compared to the old Clemenceau-Lloyd George-Wilson days. There is a feeling of "another place". . . . The secretaries and experts have become more familiar and take liberties which they would never have dared in the hot silence of the old Ten.'³⁵

The competence of the Council of Five was quite clearly limited by the fact that it could only deal with such matters as might be left over for its consideration by the Council of Four, and on one occasion the dignity of the Five was ruffled, when it

appeared that they were requested merely to draft a telegram for the Four.³⁶ At first there seems to have been definite reference of particular topics to the Five, as in the case of the Bavarian question that was before the first meeting. At the end of that first meeting there was a discussion as to the agenda for the following day, it being agreed that it should include items relating to the blockade of Austria and Esthonia and 'other questions which Mr. Balfour undertook to submit'.³⁷ Evidently at this stage the British Foreign Secretary was acting as the link between the Four and the Five.

As time went on two types of business tended to come automatically within the sphere of the Foreign Ministers, specific reference in each particular case being dispensed with. First, there were the economic problems connected with the blockade and its gradual relaxation, one of which had been the immediate cause of the inauguration of the new body. Secondly, from its second meeting the Council of Five became the recognized organ for handling the reports of the Territorial Committees in general. As we have seen, though these bodies had been established by the Council of Ten, only a preliminary report on the revision of the Treaties of 1839 and the Polish Committee's recommendations concerning Germany's eastern frontiers, on which no agreement was found to be possible, had actually been before the larger body, and the task was now inherited by the Foreign Ministers. Through their dealings with these territorial issues, by far the most important part of their work, they had a great deal to do with the actual work of treaty-making, though the frontiers in question were not in general those affecting the treaty with Germany.

Theoretically, the decisions of the Foreign Ministers were, of course, always open to revision by the Council of Four. There were references to this point at the second meeting of the Five, when they were discussing the first territorial report to come before them. Mr. Balfour doubted whether they were empowered to give approval to the recommendations in it and expressed the view that their best course would be merely to forward them to the Council of Four with the arguments adduced for and against. Mr. Lansing thereupon observed that he 'assumed that any resolution of the meeting must be *ad referendum* to the Supreme Council'.³⁸ This latter view was accepted without dispute, but the members of the Council of Five went beyond the suggestion

of Mr. Balfour, in giving definite approval to the proposals of the territorial experts subject to the overriding powers of the Heads of Governments. The formula employed ran as follows: 'In accordance with instructions given to it by the Supreme Council of the Allies, the Council of Ministers for Foreign Affairs studied the question of . . . frontiers. . . . It begs to suggest to the Supreme Council the adoption of the draft articles proposed.'³⁹

On 15th April, at their fourth meeting, the Foreign Ministers were concerned with a number of miscellaneous issues which, it was decided, should be referred to the Council of Four.⁴⁰ The latter, if we may judge from a subsequent remark by President Wilson as to a desire for a 'fuller conference',⁴¹ seems to have been under the impression that its intervention was necessary in order that progress might be facilitated. Accordingly a joint session of the Big Four and the Council of Five was arranged for the following day, 16th April, when M. Clemenceau opened the proceedings by stating 'that the meeting had been called in order to bring together the Council of Four and the Council of Five', and calling upon Baron Sonnino to report on behalf of the Five concerning 'what they had accomplished and what still remained to be done'.⁴²

Four more of these joint meetings were held, on 1st, 2nd, and 12th May, and on 17th June,⁴³ these being, in fact, revivals of the Council of Ten, and, indeed, at the end of the record of the discussions on 1st May there occurs a reference to the meeting arranged for the following day by that name.⁴⁴ The Americans recognized this by separating the minutes of these meetings from the 'F.M.' Series and tacking them on to the Council of Ten records ('B.C.' Series). There were no revivals of the Supreme War Council as such, the last meeting of that body being on Monday, 17th March.

On three occasions the Council of Foreign Ministers, having added Belgian and Dutch representatives for the purpose, transformed itself into a special body charged with the consideration of the revision of the Treaties of 1839. The preliminary report of the Belgian Affairs Committee on this matter, which had been before the Council of Ten on 8th March, had suggested that those Treaties should be revised by a special conference of representatives of the Powers with General Interests, other guarantor Powers which had been faithful and the Dutch Government.⁴⁵ The Council of Ten accepted the suggestion and invited the

Dutch Government to participate, but did not carry the matter any further. On 4th April the Dutch informed M. Pichon of their willingness to send representatives, and the making of further arrangements was then left to the Council of Foreign Ministers.

On 19th April that Council decided that the special conference should take the form of a meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the Great Powers to which the Belgians and the Dutch should send representatives,⁴⁶ Japanese participation being assumed unless notification to the contrary was forthcoming within three days. It was agreed provisionally that the meeting might take place at the end of April, and M. Pichon informed the Dutch Government of these decisions; but there was considerable delay, so that it was not until their meeting of 9th May that the Foreign Ministers instructed Pichon to fix the 19th as the date.⁴⁷

The special conference, which was simply an enlarged meeting of the Council of Five, duly took place, as arranged, on the afternoon of 19th May, and was continued on the following day.⁴⁸ There was then an adjournment to enable the Dutch to consult their Government at home, after which a further meeting was held on 3rd June, when the Dutch representative made a long statement which ruled out any possibility of the territorial adjustments that had been contemplated.⁴⁹

The Belgians were exceedingly dissatisfied with the result of these meetings. They also complained because: (a) they were in fact being excluded from the inner counsels of the Conference while the German Treaty, in which they were vitally interested, was being shaped; (b) their claim to special consideration in the matter of Reparations had not been definitely approved. During the early days of May the Belgian delegates seem to have talked seriously of withdrawal from the Conference, but they were partially pacified by a guarantee of practical priority with respect to Reparations and then agreed reluctantly to accept the German Treaty.⁵⁰

The participation of the Powers with Special Interests in April, May, and June, was indeed on very restricted lines, for, though the Plenary Conference met on five occasions, on three of these—6th, 29th, and 31st May—the business was the purely formal communication of the terms of the German and Austrian Treaties on the very eve of their presentation to the enemy. The only plenary sessions of any value were those of 11th and 28th April, which, as we have already noted, were devoted to the approval

of the draft constitutions for the I.L.O. and the League of Nations. The preparation of the greater part of the German and Austrian Treaties was the work of the Councils of Four and Five, in conjunction with their sub-committees and the Central Drafting Committee.

CHAPTER XIV

THE GERMAN TREATY

THE Council of Four, as we have seen, had come into existence primarily because the Council of Ten had proved itself to be entirely unsuitable for dealing with the great problems that had been reserved by the Great Powers for their own consideration, and, immediately following the return of President Wilson, the Big Four, in getting to grips with these problems, brought the Conference to its crisis.

These reserved problems were, in the main, those affecting the making of the settlement with Germany, which the delegates of the Great Powers, with the exception of the Italians, had always regarded as the chief object of the Conference, and which had been in the forefront since, on 22nd February, Mr. Balfour had brought forward his resolution urging that such a settlement was a matter which it was 'desirable to consider without delay'.¹ Even the Italians, though refusing to give any official recognition to the priority of the German settlement, were reluctantly obliged to concede such priority in practice if, as Baron Sonnino put it, the questions affecting Germany should prove 'ripe for solution first'.²

It was to an examination of these questions that the inner group from which the Council of Four was to grow had devoted itself in the days immediately preceding the return of the President, and the latter, together with the British and French Premiers, was afterwards engaged in vigorous controversy even before the Council of Four could be said to have any official existence. The situation was thus clarified, the issues were narrowed down so that the points of disagreement stood out clearly, and the fundamentals had to be faced at last. From Fontainebleau Mr. Lloyd George issued his Memorandum,³ which for the first time brought the Conference to consider the German Treaty as a whole, for the making of which the solutions of such closely related problems as those of Reparations, the Rhineland and the Saar must be perfectly fitted together.

These were the problems occupying most of the attention of the Council of Four during the three weeks from 24th March to

13th April, which marked the crisis of the Conference. The first of these three weeks was the time of greatest tension, and this reached its height on 28th March, when M. Klotz presented the French Reparations demands in full and when a complete deadlock concerning the Saar sent M. Clemenceau home in disgust after heated exchanges with President Wilson.⁴ A breaking-up of the Conference was, however, avoided, the situation was eased somewhat on the following day, and by the beginning of April compromise solutions of all three problems were being worked out. By the 13th the Council of Four felt that the progress which had been made justified the dispatch of an invitation to the Germans to send delegates to France to receive the Treaty in the near future.

During this time of crisis the general Conference procedure was fundamentally different from what it had been in January, for it was the period of greatest informality in the Council of Four, which thus contrasted sharply with the inelastic Council of Ten. The Four did not farm out problems to long-term committees and commissions, but kept a firm control over all proceedings, as the Council of Ten had done only in the particular case of the military and naval terms. The new handling of the Reparations problem stands out in sharp contrast to the procedure of the Council of Ten, which set up a Reparations Commission and then left it to flounder without adequate guidance. Instead, for help in dealing with this and other problems, the Council of Four relied upon *ad hoc* committees which it could easily manipulate.

The new approach was foreshadowed as early as 10th March, before the Council of Four had begun its official existence and before the return of President Wilson from America. On this date the British and French Premiers, at their meeting with Colonel House, decided to set up two small committees, one to examine the problem of Reparations and the other to deal with the Rhineland question. The appointment of these bodies was kept a close secret and a report within two days was required.⁵

This kind of procedure became general when the Council of Four had got into its stride after 24th March. The first step was usually an informal consultation of experts, who might be called in for oral discussion or be requested to submit memoranda. These memoranda might be the work of individual experts or groups of experts, such as the Anglo-American group which prepared the 'Heads of Agreement' that were to form the basis

of discussions concerning the Saar.⁶ Then would probably come the appointment of a special committee to work out a solution of the problem at issue within the limits agreed upon. The most notable example was the Saar Committee, appointed on 2nd April.⁷

These committees were usually small, being composed of an American, a British and a French representative, and these were usually the personal nominees of the respective Heads of Governments. Thus Mr. Lloyd George would appoint some one like Mr. Philip Kerr or Mr. Headlam-Morley, and M. Clemenceau would appoint M. Tardieu. The terms of reference were usually very precise, and, as in the case of the two committees set up on 10th March, a report was requested almost immediately. On the presentation of the report there would be a renewal of contact between the members of the committee and the Four and they might be set to work again with fresh instructions, or different experts might be called in. By such flexibility of procedure did the President and the Premiers surmount the biggest obstacles in their path.

Meanwhile they had taken steps to hasten the completion of the work of the various commissions and committees that had been established in the days of the Council of Ten, the Balfour attempt to secure the presentation of all reports in early March having completely failed. On 3rd April M. Dutasta had issued the following circular letter to the chairmen of the bodies concerned: 'Je suis chargé par le Conseil des Premiers Ministres des Puissances Alliées de porter à votre connaissance la décision suivante: Les Commissions qui n'ont pas encore présenté leurs rapports sont priées de le faire avant le lundi 7 avril à midi.'⁸

When the work of these more permanent bodies had at length been completed, their reports in general were handled either by the Council of Four or by the Foreign Ministers. Only the League and Labour Commissions, as we have seen, reported directly to the Plenary Conference, but these were, indeed, important exceptions, for the products of their labours, the League Covenant and the plan for an I.L.O., together formed a considerable section of the German treaty. The other General Commissions, apart from the Reparations Commission, which failed to produce any final conclusions, and the Aviation Commission, whose report on the interim control of German civil aviation came before the Council of Five,⁹ reported to the Four.

Only two of the Territorial Committees, those dealing with Polish affairs and with Belgian and Danish affairs, were directly concerned with the German settlement, and these had already presented first reports to the Council of Ten in March. The main reports of the Belgian and Danish Committee, however, both dated 19th March, remained to be dealt with after the Council of Ten had broken up, and there was also the reserved question of the Polish frontier with Germany outstanding.

The Council of Four, taking up this latter question where it had been left by the Ten, decided to modify the original scheme in various ways, notably by the establishment of the Free City of Danzig, and, the American experts having been charged with the preparation of a draft embodying the modifications decided upon, the formal approval of the Four was given on 22nd April.¹⁰ The report of the Belgian Committee dealing with German cessions to Belgium (Eupen and Malmédy) and projected cessions to the Netherlands to balance suggested rectifications of the Dutch-Belgian frontiers, came before the Council of Four. Eventually that Council decided to strike out the clauses providing for German cessions to Holland, presumably because of the firm Dutch opposition to any territorial modification of the Treaties of 1839. The report of the same committee on the frontier between Germany and Denmark in Schleswig was the first territorial report to come before the Council of Foreign Ministers.¹¹

The naval, military and air clauses for the German Treaty, it will be recalled, had been completed in the days of the Council of Ten, being approved in general by that Council on 17th March, the first substantial section of the Treaty to approach readiness for presentation to the enemy. There were, nevertheless, a number of outstanding issues to be dealt with under the supervision of the Council of Four. In the first place, there were several suggestions of minor changes in the military terms, including a British proposal for compelling the enemy to disclose secret processes for the manufacture of poison-gas. These were considered by the first joint meeting of the Councils of Four and Five, on 16th April.¹² Then in connection with the naval clauses there were issues affecting submarine cables and the Kiel Canal. The question of the disposal of enemy submarine cables that had been cut during the war was raised by the sixth clause of Part 2 of the draft of naval, military and air clauses presented in March, and the matter, as previously mentioned, had been referred to

a special committee of jurists.¹³ The report of this body was delayed and did not come before the Council of Ten until its last meeting, on 24th March. Even after a decision had been arrived at on this occasion there were to be further disputes concerning the drafting of a clause to embody it.

The Kiel Canal clause was the fourth of the original naval draft, and had been, as we have seen, referred to a sub-committee of the Ports, Waterways and Railways Commission, which met on 11th March.¹⁴ The clause resulting from the report of this sub-committee, Article 38 of the draft of 17th March, was not accepted by the Council of Ten, and the matter was referred back to the sub-committee.¹⁵ On 16th April the question was raised again at the joint meeting of Premiers and Foreign Secretaries held that day, because the sub-committee had returned its report unamended. It was then decided to refer the matter to a further committee composed partly of representatives of the Great Powers on the Ports, Waterways and Railways Commission, one from each, and partly of five naval experts representing the same Great Powers.¹⁶ This Kiel Canal Committee met three times, on 18th, 19th, and 24th April, and its report was before the Council of Four on the 25th.¹⁷

The Supreme Council having decided concerning the big reserved problems, and the various subordinate bodies having at length presented their reports on the remaining issues, the chief interest centred upon the form in which the decisions arrived at were to be embodied in the Treaty to be presented to the Germans, and it was at this stage that the Central Drafting Committee of the Conference came to play such an important part. The tentative drafts of Rules of Procedure put forward by the French in November and in early January had provided that this important body should be composed of legal experts only, but the Americans seem, at a very early stage, to have doubted the wisdom of leaving the vitally important function of shaping the actual form of the treaties to the lawyers alone. 'Changes in wording,' they reasonably contended, 'often affect substance as well as form, when only form is intended.'¹⁸ They therefore argued that the 'Committee on Style', as they called it, should include some plenipotentiaries, citing the precedent of the second Hague Conference in support of their argument. Those responsible for shaping the organization of the Conference, however, had not accepted the view of Messrs. Scott and Miller, and thus there

were no plenipotentiaries directly concerned with the actual drafting of the various treaties.

The first tentative decision of the Council of Ten had been that it should 'be the duty of the General Secretariat to draft the resolutions adopted by the Conference',¹⁹ but the Council changed its mind almost immediately in favour of the French suggestion of a body of jurists. It was decided that the Drafting Committee should be composed of five members, one from each of the Great Powers, and these were afterwards chosen as follows: M. Fromageot (France), Chairman; Dr. J. B. Scott (United States); Mr. Hurst (British Empire); Signor Ricci Busatto (Italy); M. Nagaoka (Japan). 'This committee,' ran the fifteenth of the Rules of Procedure, 'shall deal only with questions which have been decided; its sole task shall be to draw up the texts of the decisions adopted and to present them to the Conference for approval.'²⁰ In practice, however, it was found, as the Americans had foreseen, that the line between purely textual revision and changes of substance was not easily drawn, and the temptation to take advantage of this fact was strong.

The most important function of the Central Drafting Committee was to put into legal form the decisions of the Supreme Council. Sometimes the Council simply adopted a resolution concerning a certain issue, and this, having been recorded and initialled by the Big Four, was then forwarded to the Drafting Committee to be put into legal form. On other occasions the Council set up special *ad hoc* bodies to prepare instructions for the Committee. The decisions of the Big Four and instructions prepared by their authorization were communicated by Sir Maurice Hankey to M. Dutasta for transmission to the Drafting Committee.

Sometimes the jurists of that Committee themselves took the initiative and asked for instructions on certain points that had so far been overlooked. Thus, at a meeting of the Supreme Council (then a Council of Three) on 28th April, Sir Maurice Hankey stated that he had been informed by Mr. Hurst that the Drafting Committee had not received instructions as to the preparation of clauses relating to Luxemburg or as to clauses concerning a number of issues affecting China. These matters would have to be provided for in the German Treaty, and this initiative prevented their being overlooked.²¹ It was clearly the 'duty of the legal experts to bear constantly in mind the general

structure of the Treaty as it was being built up. Thus, on 3rd May, Mr. Hurst appeared in person before the Supreme Council to point out that a decision of the Council made on the previous days with regard to Russia and the Baltic States would not harmonize with certain clauses included in the financial and economic sections of the Treaty. On behalf of the Drafting Committee he suggested certain amendments to put matters right, and these were accepted.²²

Some of the work for the Drafting Committee was prepared by the Council of Foreign Ministers. Thus on 15th April that Council discussed a number of miscellaneous items for inclusion in the Treaty and then forwarded its recommendations to the Drafting Committee for putting into shape.²³ Among the issues thus dealt with were the following: regulation of the opium traffic; the abrogation of the Treaties of 1839; the general renunciation by Germany of all extra-European rights; the acceptance of decisions by Allied prize courts; the legal termination of the state of war; the general advance acceptance by Germany of treaties to be concluded between the Allies and the other enemy States and of the settlement to be arranged concerning former Russian territories. The Central Drafting Committee met at 5 p.m. on the 16th²⁴ to shape the clauses dealing with these points, and then reported to the Foreign Ministers on the 17th, M. Fromageot and others attending.²⁵ There was a further report from the Drafting Committee concerning one of these clauses—that relating to the opium traffic—to the Foreign Ministers on 19th April.²⁶

The second big task of the Drafting Committee was to scrutinize the reports of the commissions and committees of the Conference and to supervise the important procedure of putting the conclusions reached into a form suitable for inclusion in the Treaty. This process was facilitated by the decision of the Council of Ten on 6th March that all subordinate bodies when presenting their reports should append draft clauses already in treaty form. The commissions and committees were instructed to consult legal advisers when preparing these draft clauses.²⁷ Contact between the members of commissions, etc., and at least some members of the Drafting Committee before the reports went up to the Four was therefore assured.

When the reports of the various subordinate bodies had been examined, and perhaps amended, by the Council of Four or the Council of Five, they were then submitted to the full Drafting

Committee for final modification. Thus the report of the War Guilt Commission to the Council of Four, dated 29th March, had seven draft clauses appended, but these were reduced to four by the Drafting Committee.²⁸ In the case of the Schleswig clauses we find that after modification by the Drafting Committee they were referred again to the Belgian and Danish Affairs Committee, some of the legal experts attending a meeting of that Committee on 5th April to explain the necessary modifications.²⁹ This practice was not general.

The amended draft of War Guilt clauses, for example, was not referred back to the Commission concerned, and we find the Ports, Waterways and Railways Commission complaining of the way in which the Drafting Committee was modifying the text of the Rhine clauses without consulting those who had prepared them. General Mance, a British delegate on the Commission, raised this matter at a meeting on 22nd April. He said that he had already taken up the matter with Mr. Hurst of the Drafting Committee and that he had been informed of the willingness of the members of that Committee to meet the Commission in order to settle the points in dispute. This suggestion was not accepted because it was coupled with the condition that the revised text issuing from the Drafting Committee should be the basis of the discussion. It was decided that the Chairman of the Commission should write a letter to the President of the Conference pointing out that they were cognizant only of their own text and modifications approved by them.³⁰ This protest was apparently not sent, because the following day Colonel Rey was able to inform the Commission that he had seen the members of the Drafting Committee that morning and found them disposed to return the text to the Supreme Council in the form desired by the Commission.

During this passage between the Ports, Waterways and Railways Commission and the Drafting Committee, Mr. Hurst had contended on behalf of the latter that they had the undoubted right to make purely textual modifications of a report submitted to them. The Commission did not contest this directly, but, as General Mance pointed out, they felt that the jurists, perhaps quite unwittingly, were so modifying the text as to make vital changes of principle as well as form. The incident shows the truth of the earlier Scott-Miller contention that it would in practice be very difficult to draw the line between changes of

form and changes of substance. The Drafting Committee was bound to have a very important influence upon the shaping of the Treaty.

Marshal Foch and the French military experts were, in fact, so suspicious of the jurists that they were unwilling to allow the draft of military clauses, after general approval by the Council of Ten on 10th March, to go before the Drafting Committee unless for this special purpose soldiers were added to that body. The Council of Ten, having already made important changes in defiance of the views of the French, was ready to humour them by conceding this demand, and, accordingly, General Weygand, Sir Henry Wilson, General Bliss and General Cavallero were temporarily added to the Drafting Committee for the purposes of the discussion of the military clauses.³¹ This co-optation of interested parties to serve on the Drafting Committee for a specific purpose was suggested by M. Stefanescu of the Ports, Waterways and Railways Commission, who urged that delegates from the particular States concerned should sit temporarily with the jurists, but this idea was not taken up.³²

In addition to the case of the Rhine clauses, already mentioned in connection with the Ports, Waterways and Railways Commission, several definite instances of action by the Central Drafting Committee in such manner as to affect the substance of the Treaty may be given. The sections affected were those concerned with the rights of a mandatory State, the terms for German re-purchase of the Saar mines, the restoration of enemy submarine cables, and Dominion membership of the I.L.O.

The rights of a mandatory Power were set forth in Article 22 of the League Covenant. The League enthusiasts, such as President Wilson and Lord Robert Cecil, were anxious to prevent the raising of military forces by the mandatory Power from among the natives of the mandated territory, but the French had challenged this principle during the discussions in the early days of the Council of Ten. As a compromise it had been agreed that to the general prohibition of the establishment of military and naval bases and the training of the natives in the arts of war there should be added a clause permitting such training if it were for 'police purposes and the defence of the territory'.³³ This wording was included by the League Commission as part of Article 22 of its draft Covenant, and in this form the clause in question was finally presented to the Plenary Conference on 28th April.

After this, however, and at almost the last moment before the Treaty was presented to the Germans, the French secured the addition by the Drafting Committee of the words 'and of the territory of the mother country'.³⁴ President Wilson was informed by Sir Maurice Hankey not only of the change, but also of the fact that it had been made at the behest of M. Clemenceau himself, and the latter was at once told that after the approval of the Covenant by the Conference nobody could order such an alteration, not even the Supreme Council. Mr. Miller was then instructed to go over the text of the Covenant as it had come from the Drafting Committee in order to discover any other changes.

Accordingly he collaborated with Mr. Philip Noel-Baker of the British Delegation, and, obtaining from Mr. Hurst of the Drafting Committee copies of the French and English texts, they read over these very carefully, comparing them with those reported by the League Commission to the Plenary Conference. They found not only that the words mentioned had been slipped into Article 22, but also that there were other changes, mostly of a minor character, including, however, the placing of Italy among the States invited to adhere to the Covenant instead of among the original signatories, on the supposition that she was not going to sign the German Treaty.

Mr. Miller then sent a memorandum to President Wilson, noting all the various changes he and Mr. Noel-Baker had discovered, and in the evening the President telephoned to Miller instructing him to take up the question of these changes, especially that in Article 22, with Dr. J. B. Scott, the American member of the Drafting Committee. Accordingly Miller saw Scott, who agreed to secure the elimination of the inserted phrase from Article 22, and also the replacing of Italy among the signatories now that her mood had changed. This was done.³⁵

The clauses relating to the Saar valley provided for the re-purchase of the coal-mines by Germany at the end of the fifteen years of the special régime, in the event of the plebiscite's resulting in her favour. The Drafting Committee so worded this section of the Treaty that the re-purchase had to be made in gold immediately after the plebiscite, in default of which the territory was to remain permanently separated from the Reich, and this point appears to have escaped notice until the Germans, having received the text of the Treaty, sent in a vigorous protest. Mr.

Lloyd George was indignant that such a clause should ever have been included, and a change was made so that in the event of German inability to pay immediately in gold the matter would go to the Reparations Commission.³⁶

With regard to the question of submarine cables, originally of German ownership, that had been cut by the Allies in the course of naval and military operations, the Council of Ten at its last meeting had instructed the Drafting Committee to prepare a clause to the effect that 'The Treaty should not debar Germany from repairing at her own expense submarine cables cut . . . during the war.'³⁷ The Drafting Committee afterwards produced Article 39, but this, according to the Americans, did not conform to the instructions of the Council of Ten, and Mr. Lansing raised the question at the meeting of the Council of Foreign Ministers on 30th April.³⁸ The matter was referred to the President and Premiers, who sat together with the Foreign Ministers on 1st and 2nd May to consider the issues involved. At the first of these two meetings President Wilson suggested a compromise, and it was agreed that he should draft a resolution embodying this for submission to the next meeting. This draft resolution was discussed on the 2nd, but no decision was reached, and the matter was finally settled by the Heads themselves.³⁹

When the draft scheme for an I.L.O. had been produced it was found to accord to the British Dominions a status inferior to that conferred upon them by the League Covenant, and Sir Robert Borden led the way in attempting to secure a rectification of this. As a result of his efforts an agreed amendment was introduced at the plenary session of 11th April, and the Drafting Committee was accordingly instructed to make the alterations necessary to secure conformity in this respect between the I.L.O. draft and the League Covenant. The Committee proved obdurate, however, and the Canadian Premier had to carry the issue to the Council of Four, which then gave very definite instructions that the words in Articles 7 and 35 to which the Dominions objected should be eliminated.⁴⁰

On the eve of its presentation to the Germans a number of general points concerning the form of the Treaty had to be decided, and some of these were discussed at meetings of the Supreme Council on 25th and 26th April. On the 25th it was decided that the Treaty should be printed in both French and English languages, which should both be official. On the 26th,

members of the Drafting Committee being in attendance, the question was raised as to whether the Treaty should be 'agreed' or 'imposed', and the decision was in favour of the word 'agreed'. It was decided also not to state the principles upon which the settlement was being based, since they were expressed in the preface to the League Covenant. The preamble to the Treaty seems to have been the work of Dr. Scott, his draft being accepted in preference to a French draft.⁴¹

Another matter of some importance was the way in which the Treaty was to become effective and thus bring the state of war to an end. This question was one of those referred to the Drafting Committee by the Foreign Ministers on 15th April, and the Committee endeavoured without immediate success to secure a ruling from the Council of Four as to how the Treaty was to come into force. In default of such guidance the Drafting Committee, in reporting back to the Council of Foreign Ministers, had to make use of a formula simply stating that hostilities would cease 'from the coming into force of the present Treaty'.⁴² Mr. Lansing interpreted this as implying that ratification by all States would thus be necessary and suggested that ratification by Germany and three Great Allied Powers would be sufficient. M. Fromageot pointed out that it was not for the Drafting Committee to decide as to how the Treaty would come into force, only the Council of Four could decide that.⁴³ The matter was referred back for further consideration, and eventually, in view of the possibility that Italy might not adhere to the Treaty, the Council of Four (Three) decided that ratification by Germany and three of the principal Allied and Associated Powers would suffice.

CHAPTER XV

VERSAILLES

ON 13th April the Council of Four decided that the main work of the Conference was so far advanced that the time had come to invite the German Government to send plenipotentiaries to meet those of the Allied and Associated Powers, and, in accordance with the idea that had been prevalent since the early days of November, Versailles was selected as the place where negotiations with the enemy should be conducted. The exact character of these negotiations and the manner of the German delegates' participation now became matters of major importance. As early as the beginning of March, we learn from records of a conversation between Mr. Balfour, M. Clemenceau, and Colonel House, there was general agreement that the rôle of the enemy delegates was to be a restricted one. They were to come to Versailles in order to receive the text of the Treaty and then, after an interval for consultation with their own Government, they were to meet the Allies and Associates for the purpose of signing the document and for no other purpose. In accordance with this general feeling the Council of Four now decided that there should be no oral discussion between the Allies and the Germans of the terms embodied in the draft Treaty, so that all negotiations would have to be by exchange of notes.

Accordingly, the following telegram was dispatched from Paris to be received in Berlin on 18th April: 'The Supreme Council of the Allied and Associated Powers has decided to invite the German delegation, bringing with them their credentials, to appear at Versailles on the evening of April 25th for the purpose of receiving the text of the preliminaries of the treaty, as drawn up by the Allied and Associated Powers. The German delegation must confine itself strictly to its rôle, and must consist only persons qualified for their special mission.'² The restricted nature of the forthcoming exchanges was thus clearly intimated to the German Government, which was in consequence unwilling to send plenipotentiaries to France and therefore replied on the 20th that it was about to send to Versailles three delegates who would be empowered only to receive the terms and transmit them

to Germany.³ The Council of Four, however, insisted upon the sending of plenipotentiaries as fully authorized to deal with the whole matter of the question of peace as are representatives of the Allied and Associated Powers',⁴ and Berlin, having made its gesture of protest, had perforce to concede the point.

Some delay had inevitably resulted, so that it was not until the 28th that the special train conveying six German plenipotentiaries, whose leader was the Foreign Minister, Count Brockdorff-Rantzau, together with a large staff, left the capital. The Germans duly arrived at Versailles on the 29th, late in the evening, and were accommodated at the Hôtel des Réservoirs.⁵ The verification of credentials followed on 1st May at the Hôtel Trianon, the Allied committee being that set up on 18th January.

Certain difficulties arose in connection with these formalities, M. Jules Cambon, as Chairman of the Credentials Committee, objecting to a suggestion that he should himself approach the Germans and proposing instead that Count Brockdorff-Rantzau be informed of the readiness of the Credentials Committee to receive him and his colleagues at the Hôtel Trianon. This procedure was decided upon, and the Germans were thus informed. The German Foreign Minister, however, was unwilling to attend at the head of his delegation for this purpose, since M. Clemenceau, Chairman of the Inter-Allied Conference, would not be present; but, not wishing to break off negotiations on such grounds, he informed the Allies that he would attend to introduce Dr. Landsberg, the German Minister of Justice, who would head the German Credentials Committee. There was almost a last-minute hitch, for, just as M. Cambon and his colleagues were about to start for Versailles, they heard a rumour that Count Brockdorff-Rantzau would not attend, and there were hurried telephonic exchanges before matters were put right. Dr. Landsberg and two other delegates arrived at the Trianon at 3.15 p.m. on 1st May and were introduced by Brockdorff-Rantzau to Cambon and his colleagues. Credentials were then exchanged.

The examination of the credentials of both sides was by no means a lengthy business. On the Allied side there was some doubt as to the authority of the German delegates to represent the Reich as a whole. The French had, as their November Plan clearly showed, originally contemplated the separate representation of Bavaria at least, and it was M. Cambon who now raised the general question, which was referred to the Allied legal

experts. The latter, however, reported that the full powers signed by President Ebert enabled the German delegates to act on behalf of the German States as a whole, and this view was accepted by the Council of Four.⁶ Thus after a few days M. Cambon informed the Germans that their credentials had been accepted as valid by his committee. Dr. Landsberg, in returning the credentials of the Allied and Associated delegates, pointed out that two countries with which Germany considered herself to be at war, Montenegro and Costa Rica, were not represented, while States such as Czechoslovakia and the Hedjaz, with which the Reich was not at war, had presented papers. The point was, of course, not pressed, M. Cambon merely noting and reporting the German comments.⁷

Apart from these proceedings with regard to credentials there had been no contact between the Germans and the Allies up to 4th May, and the enemy delegates, who had expected that negotiations would begin at once, were impatient at the delay. Accordingly they now sent in a formal request that there should be no further loss of time, and, in reply, they were informed that the Treaty would be presented to them on the 7th.⁸ *Page 191*

A summary of the draft terms prepared by the various organs of the Conference and sanctioned by the Supreme Council was presented to the representatives of all the Allied and Associated Powers at a special plenary session held on 6th May, the choice of a date immediately preceding that of the presentation to the Germans indicating very clearly the purely formal nature of the proceedings. Representatives of the press were not admitted to this session, it having been decided that the terms were not to be made public until after their reception by the Germans. Tardieu acted as *rapporteur* on behalf of the Bureau of the Conference, at first pausing from time to time to allow of a translation into English, which was later dispensed with as unnecessary. The inevitable endorsement followed, though no formal vote was taken, protests from Marshal Foch and from the representatives of China and Portugal being recorded in the protocol.⁹

There appears to have been a suggestion that the draft terms, after this formal endorsement by the Inter-Allied Conference, should be presented to the Germans by a committee,¹⁰ but the procedure of presentation at a general meeting of plenipotentiaries was substituted. Invitations were at first issued only to those Small Powers deemed to have been effective belligerents: Belgium,

Brazil, Czechoslovakia, Greece, Poland, Portugal, Roumania and Serbia (Yugoslavia), together with the British Dominions. At the last minute, however, it was decided to admit also the delegates of States whose belligerency had been theoretical.¹¹

These changes were obviously made in order to satisfy the Small Powers, and their effect was the formal establishment of what may accurately be termed 'The Congress of Versailles'. This took place on the afternoon of 7th May at the Hôtel Trianon, where, as Mr. Lloyd George reminds us, the Supreme War Council had been meeting less than a year before 'to the continuous sound of the throb and thud of the German guns at Château Thierry'.¹² Press representatives were admitted to this meeting as far as the accommodation would permit, after fears of exclusion had led to gatherings of protest on 23rd and 25th April. The proceedings were opened by M. Clemenceau, who stood to make his few formal remarks, and then Count Brockdorff-Rantzau replied, but without rising from his seat.¹³ A charitable explanation of this behaviour as being due to extreme nervousness has since been contradicted.¹⁴

After the formalities of 7th May there was no further meeting until the signing of the Treaty took place more than a month later, and during the interval all exchanges between the Allies and the Germans were by means of written communication. This procedure, of which the Germans had been officially informed by M. Clemenceau at the opening of the proceedings,¹⁵ stands out in the history of peace-making, and it certainly tended to emphasize the extent to which the treaty was dictated by victors to vanquished, but it had its publicity value, and the Germans took full advantage of this fact. Moreover they did secure important modifications of the original text, and it seems hardly likely that they would have fared better in secret oral negotiation. The story of these exchanges with the Germans falls into three main divisions: (1) from the presentation of the draft terms on 7th May to the receipt of the German counter-proposals on the 30th; (2) from that date to the dispatch of the general reply of the Allies on 16th June; (3) from the 16th to the final ceremony on the 28th.

The Germans were given fifteen days within which to prepare their general reply in English and French, and in the meantime they had the opportunity to make observations with regard to particular items and to ask for explanations. For the purpose of

examining the bulky text handed to them on the 7th, upon which their translators were busy until the middle of the following night, the German Delegation was divided into various sections and these were set to work immediately.¹⁶ We are told that the members of the Delegation were so impressed by the fact that they were surrounded by hostile influences that, in order to prevent leakages through secret microphones possibly installed before their arrival, they had a pianist hard at work during all their early discussions.¹⁷ They gradually learned, however, that they had over-estimated either the malice or the cunning of their enemies, and the musical accompaniment was then dropped.

At eight o'clock on the evening of 8th May Count Brockdorff-Rantzau held a special meeting of the chairmen of the sections and their sub-committees, for the general consideration of the broad outlines of the Treaty,¹⁸ and on the following day a preliminary memorandum was sent to M. Clemenceau urging that the general effect of the demands of the Allies would be the imposition of burdens beyond the capacity of any nation to endure and that in any case some of the terms were incapable of fulfilment.¹⁹ To this the French Premier replied, on behalf of the Supreme Council, that the main structure of the Treaty was not open to question and that the Allies could only take note of 'practical suggestions' put forward by the Germans,²⁰ and so the various sections had to shape their observations accordingly.

During the first period of these exchanges the Germans, in the fight for revision, proceeded to attack the various points of the draft Treaty by means of a succession of separate notes, each dealing with one issue.²¹ Their efforts, however, were almost completely unsuccessful, only two minor concessions being secured, and it has been contended that their procedure was faulty.²² Each note received its appropriate reply, drafted by the personal staff of the Council of Four. As the expiration of the time-limit drew near, Count Brockdorff-Rantzau asked for an extension, and the request was granted, an addition of seven days being arranged.²³

The Foreign Minister and some of his leading experts then travelled to Spa, where, on 18th and 22nd May, they took part in important discussions with some of the chief members of the German Cabinet. A tentative draft of a covering letter, to accompany the full German reply to the Allies, had been prepared in Berlin by Herr Erzberger, who disapproved of the attack by

means of notes on single issues, and this was carefully studied at Spa. Count Brockdorff-Rantzau was not entirely satisfied with this draft and secured authority to develop the details as he thought fit, while the general trend of the document was to be taken as a guide.²⁴

On his return to Versailles the Foreign Minister set all his experts to work upon the production of the comprehensive reply to the demands of the Allies, but it was not until 29th May that the work was completed. The German reply consisted of a covering letter and a general memorandum, the first section of the latter constituting a general criticism of the Treaty as a whole and the second section setting forth the counter-proposals in detail.²⁵ These details were not immediately made public in Allied countries, it being intended that they should be published simultaneously with the reply of the Allied and Associated Powers. At a meeting of the Council of Four on 13th June, however, Mr. Lloyd George mentioned his having received a letter from Lord Riddell pointing out that most newspapers would not be able to handle so much material in one day. Accordingly it was decided to permit the publication of the German counter-proposals separately on the day prior to that fixed for the release of the text of the Allied reply, i.e., on the 16th.²⁶

The general question of the establishment of organization to deal with the German notes and counter-proposals and to prepare the Allied reply was considered by the Supreme Council (then a Council of Three) on 5th May. It was decided to establish twelve committees, consisting of representatives of the Four Great Powers only, to deal with sections of the draft Treaty as follows: (1) League of Nations, (2) German Frontiers, (3) European Political Clauses, (4) Extra-European Political Clauses, (5) Military, Naval and Air Clauses, (6) Prisoners of War and Graves, (7) Responsibilities and Punishment, (8) Reparation and Restitution, (9) Financial Clauses, (10) Economic Clauses, (11) Ports, Waterways and Railways, (12) International Labour Section. In addition there was, of course, to be an Editing Committee.

On 10th May the Secretariat-General issued a circular letter listing the committees to be set up and outlining their duties. These were, in the first place, to deal with 'questions of detail, requests for explanations and the like', put forward by the German delegates during the interval before the presentation of

their general reply, all matters of policy arising from these German notes being, however, specifically reserved for the consideration of the Council of Four.²⁷ On 4th June, after the receipt of the German counter-proposals, the Council of Four decided to request the various committees to furnish not later than Monday the 9th all material for inclusion in the detailed Allied reply. They were to state clearly all concessions considered advisable and to endeavour to explain and justify the proposals of the Treaty rather than to refute German arguments. It was stated that decisions of the Council of Four concerning any important alterations made in the text of the draft Treaty would be communicated to the committees concerned in the usual manner.²⁸

We have fairly full information as to the working of this machinery in connection with the clauses relating to Ports, Waterways and Railways. The circular letter sent out by the Secretary-General on 10th May went to Signor Crespi, the Chairman of the Ports, Waterways and Railways Commission, and he, without summoning a plenary session, arranged for the establishment of what was, in effect, a sub-committee of one representative of each of the Four Great Powers, chosen from the members of the Commission. During the period preceding the presentation of the full German counter-proposals this body does not appear to have had any work to do. After the receipt of a further circular letter with regard to the submission of material before 9th June, Signor Crespi summoned a plenary session of his Commission for Saturday, 7th June, and thereat officially informed the members of the previous establishment of the sub-committee of four. It was decided that this body should meet on the following day and that the delegates of the Small Powers represented on the Commission might attend to express their views.²⁹ This meeting of 8th June duly took place, and the report then adopted was approved by the Commission in plenary session on the 9th.³⁰ This report came before the Council of Four on the 13th, there being annexed to it some suggested amendments to the text of the Treaty. The Big Four having approved these modifications, Sir Maurice Hankey was instructed to forward to M. Dutasta an initialled copy of the annex containing them, for submission to the Drafting Committee with instructions to modify the text of the Treaty accordingly.³¹

While the various committees were thus engaged in preparation

of detailed points for inclusion in the Allied reply, the Great Powers were face to face with the fundamental issue of general revision of the Treaty. Now that this document was for the first time viewed as a whole, it was evident that, as Professor Shotwell puts it, 'when all the sacrifices were added together, the whole was greater than the sum of the parts',³² but, as it was inconceivable that the French should object to it on that score, any initiative towards revision must come from the British and the Americans. It was indeed from the former that the chief suggestions for revision actually came, the general American view being that the time for such action had gone by.

The early days of June saw what M. Tardieu has called 'the second and most serious crisis of the Conference'.³³ The issue was faced first of all at separate meetings of the British and Americans and then by the Council of Four. Some of the more important ministers from London joined their colleagues in Paris, and a Cabinet meeting was held on Saturday, 31st May, Mr. Winston Churchill, as Secretary of State for War, reading a memorandum drawn up by the Imperial General Staff for the guidance of the Premier and his colleagues. Then, on the morning and afternoon of the following Sunday and on the morning of the Monday, 2nd June, there were joint meetings of the British Empire Delegation and the Cabinet, at which the whole question of revision was threshed out.³⁴ The American Delegation met at the Crillon on 3rd June from 11 a.m. until 1.15 p.m., this being the first and last occasion on which the President and the other plenipotentiaries met together with all the experts of Inquiry.³⁵

At the meetings of the Council of Four which followed, the chief issues arising were those connected with the Germano-Polish frontier and with Reparations, a new committee being established in each case. On 4th June the Big Four, mainly as a result of British pressure, decided in principle upon important modifications of the eastern frontier of Germany and established the Eastern Frontiers Committee, composed solely of representatives of the Four Great Powers (Dr. Lord, Mr. Headlam-Morley, General le Rond and the Marquis della Torretta) and temporarily replacing the Polish Affairs Committee, to make the necessary changes.³⁶ On 13th June German objections to the proposed settlement in the region of Memel were also referred to this committee for comment.³⁷ On 3rd June a small committee

was set up to examine certain proposals brought forward by Mr. Lloyd George as a basis for a compromise concerning Reparations, and the British Premier took the unusual step of becoming a member himself, his colleagues being Mr. Lamont, M. Loucheur and Signor Crespi. This committee met on the following day, but was unable to make progress, and the issue came back to the Council of Four on 7th and 9th June.³⁸

The general question of revision hung in the balance until somewhere about the 10th, on which date M. Tardieu wrote to House a letter which, according to his own account, was intended to force the issue, and the Colonel seems to have shown the letter to President Wilson that same evening.³⁹ The chief decisions of the Council of Four were certainly made between 10th and 13th June. Thus the report of the Eastern Frontiers Committee was before the Council on the 11th and 12th, and on the 12th the Drafting Committee was instructed to modify the text of the Treaty in accordance with the final decisions then made. On 13th June the Big Four gave their approval to a draft reply to the Germans with regard to the Polish clauses.⁴⁰ On 10th June Mr. Lloyd George, in view of the failure to agree upon any important modification of the Reparations clauses, presented to the Council of Four a memorandum by Lord Sumner, which became the basis of the reply to the Germans in this connection.⁴¹

The general form of the Allied reply to the German counter-proposals had been discussed by the Council of Four on 4th June, and it had been decided that the reply should consist of: (a) a relatively short covering letter and (b) a longer memorandum treating in detail the special questions that had been raised, and defining in the clearest possible manner the principles and reasons on which the Treaty was based.⁴² This longer memorandum was compiled from the material supplied by the various committees mentioned above.

The first draft of the covering letter, prepared by a small committee of jurists, on being considered by the Council of Four on 12th June, was deemed too weak, and, accordingly, a further committee was appointed to revise it. An important member of this new body was Mr. Philip Kerr, who was invited by Mr. Lloyd George to prepare a new text for its consideration, and the draft which was afterwards presented by the committee to the Council of Four on 13th June was almost entirely his work.⁴³ This meeting of the Council on the 13th approved this draft and

requested Sir Maurice Hankey to forward it to the Secretary-General for communication to the Editing Committee.⁴⁴

The detailed memorandum and the covering letter,⁴⁵ having thus received the approval of the Council of Four and having been signed by M. Clemenceau, as President of the Conference, were handed to the Germans by M. Dutasta on 16th June,⁴⁶ and the negotiations then entered upon their final stage. The enemy representatives were at first given three days within which to accept the terms as now finally presented, but an extension to five days was secured.⁴⁷

Confronted with these final demands, which he personally felt unable to accept, Count Brockdorff-Rantzau and most of his colleagues left Versailles and travelled by special train to Weimar, where the German Government was then installed during the meetings of the National Assembly. The fraction of the Delegation left behind at Versailles was under the direction of Herr Haniel von Haimhausen.⁴⁸ Meanwhile the Allies made military preparations, and, on 13th June, the Council of Four authorized the Superior Blockade Council to make preparations for the re-imposition of the blockade in its full rigour.⁴⁹

Count Brockdorff-Rantzau reached Weimar on 18th June and at once presented to the Cabinet his report recommending a refusal to sign the Treaty as it stood.⁵⁰ A political crisis followed, and, being unable to carry the majority with him, the Foreign Minister resigned his post on the following day, the 20th.⁵¹ This resignation involved the fall of the Scheidemann administration and the formation of another under Herr Bauer. In view of the delay involved the Allies further extended the time-limit by two days.

The new Cabinet decided at once in favour of signing the Treaty if Articles 227-230, providing for the trial of the Kaiser and other 'war criminals', and Article 231, the 'war guilt' clause, were not insisted upon. At the same time it was affirmed that Germany could not be held responsible for any difficulties that might arise in connection with the new eastern frontiers. The Weimar National Assembly endorsed this attitude at its meeting on the morning of Sunday, 22nd June, and Haimhausen at Versailles was instructed to inform the Allies accordingly, being at the same time informed that he was vested with authority 'to furnish explanations, to receive counter-explanations and to conduct the negotiations'.⁵²

That same evening the Council of Four met in Mr. Lloyd George's house in the Rue Nitot and refused to accept anything but unconditional signature of the terms as they then stood, and the Germans were thus informed immediately.⁵³ On the following day they asked for yet another extension of the time-limit, which was due to expire at seven o'clock that evening, but this further request was refused. Before the time expired, but not until about 5.30 p.m., their representatives at Versailles were able to announce that their Government had decided upon acceptance without any open reservation.⁵⁴

Preparations were at once set in motion for a ceremonial signing in the Hall of Mirrors at Versailles, and the new Foreign Minister, Herr Muller, together with his colleague Dr. Bell, travelled from Weimar to act as the plenipotentiaries of the Reich for the occasion. With the oft-described proceedings of 28th June the most important work of the Peace Conference was apparently brought to an end.

CHAPTER XVI

THE AUSTRIAN TREATY

DURING the first month of its existence the Conference worked without having arrived at any decision as to the number of treaties there were to be. The French November Plan, while referring to the conclusion of treaties with Germany and Bulgaria, had specifically reserved the question of a settlement with the Habsburg and Ottoman Empires because of the process of disintegration taking place therein, and the Conference began its work without any guidance on these points. Thus it was possible for the Ports, Waterways and Railways Commission to proceed for some weeks upon the assumption that the draft which it was preparing would form part of a single general treaty.¹ The Roumanian and Yugoslav Affairs Committee appears also to have entertained the idea that there would be a collective treaty, for it appended to its reports clauses suitable for inclusion in such a treaty.² The more usual view seems to have been that there would be a separate treaty with Germany, supplemented by subsidiary treaties, but as to the number of these latter and their order of priority there was no general agreement.

The issue, like several others, was squarely faced for the first time at the meeting of the Council of Ten on 22nd February, when, as we have noted previously, the Balfour proposals for the speedy conclusion of a preliminary settlement with Germany were under consideration, and when Baron Sonnino forced to the front the question of a settlement with the Habsburg Empire, demanding either that a definite reference to a treaty with Austria-Hungary should be inserted in the Balfour resolution or else that the indefinite phrase 'enemy Powers' should be substituted for the word 'Germany'. The Council, as we have seen, ultimately fell back upon the suggestion of Mr. Lansing that four separate and almost identical resolutions should be prepared, each one applicable to a different enemy State, thus, on 24th February, formally committing the Conference to the preparation of four separate treaties of peace, with Germany, Austria-Hungary, Bulgaria and Turkey respectively.³

The Council, however, cannot be deemed to have had the

definite intention of limiting the number of treaties to four, for at this stage, when all the leading statesmen apart from the Italians were concentrating upon the problems affecting Germany, there was no real consideration of the procedure by which peace should be restored in the territories formerly subject to the Habsburgs. In spite of the complete disintegration noted as far back as the previous autumn, as a result of which there had been signed at Belgrade, on 13th November, a separate military convention regulating the conditions under which the Armistice signed between the Allies and Austria-Hungary was to be applied in Hungary, the terms 'Austria' and 'Austria-Hungary' were loosely and interchangeably used throughout the February discussions of the Council of Ten. M. Pichon indeed did note that with regard to the settlement with 'the latter country, which had no Government, he did not know with whom the Allies could discuss conditions',⁴ but the problem was not seriously faced. It is evident that in passing the resolution with regard to the preparation of a treaty with 'Austria-Hungary' the Council of Ten was not definitely committing itself to the conclusion of a single treaty covering the area thus denoted. It might, in fact, have been reasonably argued that no treaty of peace was required at all, but only a series of agreements between the Great Powers and the Succession States.

There was from the first a general assumption that certain regions which had detached themselves from the old Dual Monarchy should be treated as Allied States. Mr. Lansing, it is true, did state to the Council of Ten on 22nd February that 'as soon as the future frontiers of the territories of Germany, Austria, Bulgaria and Turkey had been fixed, the state of war with the Czechoslovaks and the Yugoslavs would *ipso facto* also cease',⁵ but no one really considered the former as enemies and only the Italians the latter. The Allied recognition of the Czechoslovak Republic in the autumn of 1918 and the admission of its delegates to the Peace Conference in January must surely be held definitely to have transferred the area concerned from the enemy camp to that of the Allies. Similar recognition of the Yugoslav State was delayed for some months in deference to Italian feeling, but a decision in favour was made by the Supreme Council on 26th April.⁶ Thus the preamble to the draft Treaty eventually presented to the delegation from Vienna on 2nd June duly noted the recognition by the Principal Allied and Associated Powers

of the Czechoslovak Republic and the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, and in this manner excluded them from the ranks of enemy States with whom treaties of peace must be arranged.⁷

The 'German-Austrian' Delegation after its arrival from Vienna urged most forcibly the right of the region which it represented to be treated in a like manner. 'The State with which the Allied and Associated Powers have evidently the intention to conclude the projected treaty', ran the Austrian Counter-Proposals of 10th July, 'is called, by virtue of its constitutional laws and as long as they shall remain in force, the "German-Austrian Republic". Its international personality cannot, under any sense of the word, be identified with the former Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, nor with former Austria. It is, on the contrary, as successor in the rights acquired and its accepted and contracted engagements, in precisely the same situation as all the other States, issues of the former Monarchy. The German-Austrian Republic has not, since its constitution, been in a state of war with any other Power; it cannot, therefore, conclude a treaty of peace.'⁸ This plea was, nevertheless, rejected by the Council of Four, which was, perhaps illogically, determined to treat what it deemed to be the true residue of the Dual Monarchy as enemy territory.

This residue, was, however, divided into two separate States and could not, despite the resolution of 24th February, be treated as one whole. At what precise moment the Supreme Council of the Conference took official note of this fairly obvious fact is by no means clear. What the Council of Ten really contemplated in February was, presumably, the conclusion simultaneously of two very similar treaties, with Austria and Hungary respectively. Probably it was the Bela Kun revolution in Budapest that, by making necessary a delay in connection with the Hungarian settlement, first emphasized, as a matter of procedure, the entirely separate nature of the Austrian problem and the convenience of its having priority. The first definite evidence of a recognition of this separation is to be found in this record of a decision of the Supreme Council on 26th April: 'Peace with Austria and Hungary: Questions nearing settlement. . . . Austria might be invited to Paris for 15th May.'⁹ There was even then a tendency to associate the Hungarians with the Austrians, for we read in Mr. Harold Nicolson's Diary for 7th May: 'There is a row about

our not having invited the Hungarians to Paris at the same time as the Austrians. The French say that the "Conseil des Trois" had decided that such an invitation should be sent, and that the British cancelled this decision.'¹⁰ On 9th May, Mr. Hoover told the Council of Foreign Ministers that the invitation to the Austrians had been interpreted in some quarters as including the Hungarians and therefore as implying recognition of the Government of Bela Kun.¹¹ Mr. Balfour, however, was able to assure the Council that no invitation had so far been delivered to the Hungarian Government, and indeed no such invitation was delivered until after the fall of Bela Kun. The final negotiations with the Magyars and the conclusion of a treaty with them thus fell outside the scope of the Conference, which was, however, responsible for the drafting of the greater part of the document ultimately signed.

The essential foundations of the settlement in the Danubian area were decisions concerning the future frontiers, consideration of which was largely the work of two territorial committees, those dealing with Roumanian and Yugoslav Affairs, and Czechoslovak Affairs respectively. As an earlier chapter has shown, the appointment of these committees, following as it did upon hearings given by the Council of Ten to delegates of the Lesser Allies, had been based upon the acceptance of the States which they represented as units for the purpose of investigation. When the actual drafting of the treaties with the enemy countries was at hand, however, these countries obviously had to be taken as units, and it was found that the previous allocation of work among the territorial committees was not altogether appropriate.

The general way in which the reports of these committees should be handled was considered by the Council of Foreign Ministers on 8th May, when the apparent desire of the Vorarlberg district to separate itself from Austria led Mr. Balfour to urge the importance of defining the frontiers of the latter State as a unit. Mr. Lansing, however, expressed the view that no definition of the frontiers of Austria as such was necessary since 'the definition would arise automatically as a result of establishing the new States'. Mr. Balfour agreed that the reports of the territorial committees must be taken as the bases of their deliberations but thought they should be considered primarily in relation to the enemy States with which treaties were to be signed.¹² This compromise procedure was in fact followed.

Two meetings of the Council of Foreign Ministers, on 8th and 9th May, were devoted to the consideration of the main reports of the Czechoslovak and Roumanian and Yugoslav Committees, the frontiers of Hungary being thus dealt with at the first meeting and those of Austria at the second.¹³ 'There (in that heavy-tapestried room . . .),' writes Mr. Nicolson, 'the fate of the Austro-Hungarian Empire is finally settled. Hungary is partitioned by these five distinguished gentlemen—indolently, irresponsibly partitioned—while the water sprinkles on the lilac outside—while the experts watch anxiously—while A. J. B. in the intervals of dialectics on secondary points, relapses into somnolence—while Lansing draws hobgoblins upon his writing-pad—while Pichon crouching in his large chair blinks owlshly as decision after decision is actually recorded—while Sonnino, returned to Canossa, is ruggedly polite—while Makino, inscrutable and inarticulate, observes, observes, observes.'¹⁴

A supplementary report on Klagenfurt was called for, and this was presented to the Five by the Roumanian and Yugoslav Committee on the 10th.¹⁵ A joint session of the Councils of Four and Five was then held on 12th May for a general and largely final discussion of the frontiers of Austria and Hungary.¹⁶ On the 23rd miscellaneous reports affecting the Bukovina, the Banat and the Dobrudja were dealt with, some decisions being reserved.¹⁷

The Hungarian frontiers, as thus decided upon, were not at this stage communicated to the Lesser Allies, even those vitally affected, because, the Hungarian Treaty not having been brought to completion, there could be no plenary session to receive it, as in the case of the German and Austrian Treaties. Early in June, however, Bela Kun having asked the Council of Four to state its terms for an approach to peace, the Council requested its 'Second Eleven' to summon the Roumanian and Czech statesmen, M. Bratianu and Dr. Kramar, so that they might be informed of the frontiers agreed upon. This was done on 11th June and the Foreign Ministers reported to the Four.¹⁸

The Four, thereupon, not being entirely satisfied, addressed various questions to the Five, and these were considered at length at the meeting of the latter on 12th June. These questions were: (a) Why had the Council of Foreign Ministers not informed the Roumanians (and Czechs) of the boundaries agreed upon on 12th May? (b) What was M. Bratianu's attitude? (c) What was the view of the Foreign Ministers with regard to the modifications

suggested by Dr. Kramar? (d) What was the view of the Foreign Ministers with regard to the immediate line of division between the Magyar and Roumanian forces?

To these questions the Foreign Ministers replied: (a) It had not been customary to give such particulars in advance of the presentation of a treaty to the Plenary Conference. (b) M. Bratianu desired time for reconsideration, but the Foreign Ministers thought the existing boundaries should be adhered to. (c) The Five recommended certain modifications of the proposed frontier between Czechoslovakia and Hungary and had suggested these to the Committee for Czechoslovak Affairs. (d) The Five considered it essential that the military line of demarcation should be identical with the proposed permanent frontier.¹⁹

On 13th June the Council of Four dispatched notes to Bela Kun, the Czechs and the Roumanians ordering military withdrawal behind the new frontiers. The Roumanians refused, pending complete Magyar demobilization, and deadlock ensued. There the Hungarian problem was left for the time being and the fighting between Magyars and Roumanians that developed a month later delayed the appearance of the Hungarian Delegation in France until the closing stages of the Conference. With the exception of the comparatively unimportant treaty with Bulgaria the Austrian settlement was the only subsidiary one to be arranged by the Conference proper.

The most important decisions on vital issues affecting this settlement were made by the Council of Four, which awarded the Brenner frontier to Italy, determined upon a virtual legal prohibition of any union between Austria and Germany and assigned the Sudetenland to the Czechoslovak Republic. This Council also endeavoured to speed up the general work upon the Austrian Treaty, and upon its instructions, conveyed through Sir Maurice Hankey to M. Dutasta, a circular was issued from the General Secretariat to the Presidents of the various subordinate bodies of the Conference in the following terms: 'I have the honour to advise you that the Council of the Heads of States desires that the examination of questions relating to the Treaty with Austria-Hungary [*sic*] and which are within the province of your Commission should be made with the least possible delay. I am instructed to request you to submit the report concerning the clauses to be inserted in the Treaty of Peace by May 12th at the latest.'²⁰

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An important feature of the Austrian Treaty was the fact that a great part of it was composed either of texts, such as the League Covenant, lifted bodily from the draft of the German Treaty, or else of adaptations of clauses originally prepared for inclusion in that Treaty or with a general treaty in view. Obviously this process of adaptation considerably enhanced the importance of the Central Drafting Committee of the Conference. A serious defect of the draft Treaty was, indeed, the inclusion of economic and financial provisions which, being based upon clauses of the German draft, were not suited to the conditions of a small State, and there had to be considerable revision of these provisions during the final stages of the negotiations.

We have some knowledge of the process of adaptation in the sphere allotted to the Ports, Waterways and Railways Commission. On 9th May at a meeting of that Commission consideration was given to the letter from the General Secretariat asking for reports affecting the Austrian Treaty by the 12th. Signor Crespi, the Chairman, stated that only adaptation of clauses already drafted was required, and it was thereupon decided that one delegate from each of the States concerned should collaborate with the Secretariat of the Commission to effect this.²¹ On 12th May, the Commission sent up to the Council of Four its suggestions as to modifications of the clauses previously forwarded, so as to render them suitable for inclusion in the Austrian draft.²² This report was considered by the Four on the 14th, and the suggestions, having been approved, were passed on to the Central Drafting Committee, so that the necessary adaptation might be completed.

The preamble of the Austrian Treaty was largely identical with that prepared for the German, being, indeed, avowedly based upon it. The exact form of this preamble was discussed by the Council of Four between the 26th and 31st May, when references to the replacement of the Dual Monarchy by the Austrian Republic and the recognition by the Principal Allied and Associated Powers of Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia were approved and inserted. There was much discussion of the first of these additions, which ran as follows: 'Whereas the former Austro-Hungarian Monarchy has now ceased to exist and has been replaced in Austria by a republican Government. . . .' The term 'replaced' was deemed controversial, and on the 26th the Four, having discussed the matter in the presence of Messrs.

Headlam-Morley, Miller and Hudson, referred the question to the Drafting Committee, which was instructed to advise whether Austria should be considered as a new or an old State.²³ On the 27th the Four asked the Drafting Committee to deal with the matter as one of urgency, adopting whichever method might prove most suitable for the drafting of the Treaty. The issue came back to the Four on the 28th and 29th, and the following resolution was eventually adopted: 'The Drafting Committee is instructed to provide in the Treaty of Peace with Austria that the Allied and Associated Powers recognize the new State of Austria, etc.'²⁴ On the 31st words, previously included, indicating that the disruption of the Dual Monarchy had been brought about 'by the free action of the peoples', were omitted by the Four in deference to Italian sentiment.²⁵

The Council of Four decided that the text of the Treaty should be printed in three languages, French, English and Italian, but at first made no stipulation as to the prevalence of any one in the event of dispute. This matter was discussed by the Drafting Committee on 28th May, and the Committee strongly recommended that in the event of divergence the French text should prevail. Mr. Hurst informed Sir Maurice Hankey by letter on the same day, and thus the matter was before the Four on the 29th, the Council deciding that the French should be the standard text and instructing the Central Drafting Committee to insert a clause to this effect. This decision was conveyed directly by means of the return of Mr. Hurst's letter, initialled by the Four, and officially by Hankey to Dutasta.²⁶

The question of inviting the Austrians to send a delegation to France was, as already mentioned, discussed (rather prematurely as it turned out) by the Supreme Council on 26th April, and shortly afterwards there was a definite decision to invite the Austrians to St. Germain-en-Laye for the afternoon of Monday, 12th May. This decision was communicated by M. Clemenceau, as President of the Conference, to General Haller, Chief of the French Military Mission in Vienna, by letter on 1st May. An invitation was accordingly sent from the French Embassy at Vienna to Dr. Bauer, Austrian Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, on 2nd May, and the latter signified his acceptance on the 5th.²⁷ The Austrian Delegation, which was headed by the Chancellor, Dr. Renner, left Vienna on the 12th and arrived at St. Germain on the 14th.

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On 19th May at 3 p.m. the Austrians presented credentials authorizing them to negotiate on behalf of 'German Austria', and received in return those of the Allied and Associated Powers. It is noteworthy that the Austrians were presented with the credentials of Czechoslovak and Polish delegates in addition to those of the delegates from States which had declared war against the Dual Monarchy or severed diplomatic relations. Serbian credentials were issued in the name of the King of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. The credentials of the Allies and Associates did not name specifically the States with whom peace was to be made, except, strangely enough, in the case of the Panama delegates, whose credentials mentioned not only Austria and Hungary but also the other Succession States.²⁸

The draft of the Treaty was in a very incomplete state when the Austrians arrived, and, since the Council of Four was very largely occupied with the exchanges with the Germans, the whole affair seemed to remain in suspense, and there was considerable delay. Moreover there was a reluctance to recognize the Austrian Republic as 'German Austria' by a reception of the credentials as they stood. Thus on 24th May Dr. Renner wrote to M. Clemenceau pointing out that, though the Austrians had responded to the invitation to come to France, had duly presented their credentials on the 19th and returned those of the Allies on the 22nd, nothing more had been heard. He requested the opening of negotiations as soon as possible.²⁹

This led the Council of Four on the morning of the 27th to make hurried arrangements for the handing of the draft, incomplete though it was, to the Austrians at noon on the 30th. Certain sections were to be omitted completely, the terms were to be handed over in proof form, and the three language versions of the various clauses were to appear on separate pages instead of in parallel columns on the same page. The Drafting Committee was instructed to proceed accordingly. That same day M. Clemenceau replied to Dr. Renner informing him of the arrangements that were being made for the 30th, and on the 28th the Chancellor signified the readiness of the Austrians to attend.³⁰

At the same time the Council of Four dealt with the title under which the new Austrian state was to be recognized. On 28th May M. Clemenceau raised the issue, and it was agreed that the Czechoslovaks and Yugoslavs should be consulted on the matter. This consultation showed that they were opposed to the title of

'German Austria', and so, on the 29th, Jules Cambon, acting in accordance with the instructions of the Four, thus informed Dr. Renner: 'The Allied and Associated Powers have decided to recognize the new Republic under the designation of "Republic of Austria"'.³¹

A summary of the terms contained in the incomplete draft to be presented to the Austrians was given to a plenary session of the Conference on 29th May. It was explained that the Treaty was to be in general form similar to that presented to the Germans except for the omission of Section XIV of the latter Treaty, which dealt with Guarantees. Reference was also made to the reserved portions. M. Bratianu, on behalf of Roumania, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia and Poland, now caused a further hitch by demanding a delay of forty-eight hours for further examination of the items with which they were vitally concerned, and this delay the Great Powers felt bound to grant. Thus on the same day M. Clemenceau was obliged to inform Dr. Renner that the delivery of the terms to his Delegation could not take place until the following Monday, 2nd June.³² On the Saturday, 31st May, a further plenary session of the Inter-Allied Conference took place, and both Bratianu and Trumbitch vigorously but unavailingly protested against the minority safeguards contained in the draft.

Meanwhile, on 30th May, Dr. Renner had replied to M. Clemenceau, expressing the hope that the postponement of the opening of negotiations would not delay the ultimate conclusion of peace.³³ He had also asked that, in view of the state of affairs existing in Carinthia and elsewhere, he might be received by the Supreme Council and allowed to present oral observations. To this M. Clemenceau replied on the 31st: 'According to the rules set by the Conference for negotiations, the exchange of views must take place only in writing. Therefore, if the Austrian Delegation wishes to present observations it will have all liberty to do so in memoranda addressed to the President of the Conference. These memoranda will be strictly confidential and will be communicated only to members of the Supreme Council.'³⁴

The incomplete draft was duly presented in proof form to the Austrians at the Château St. Germain-en-Laye at noon on 2nd June, the following sections being omitted: Political Clauses for Italy, Financial Clauses, Reparations Clauses, Military Clauses, Clauses relating to the Serb-Croat-Slovene State. Then, during the next fortnight or so, some progress towards the

completion of the draft was made under the general supervision of the Council of Four, which at this stage was assisted by certain *ad hoc* committees, these being concerned with clauses affecting the territories to be transferred to Italy.

The first draft of clauses concerning these regions seems to have been prepared by the Italian Delegation, and it was before the Council of Four on 28th May. The Four then agreed to refer the thirty-five articles to a joint committee representing the Economics and Reparations Commissions. This body found that the first eleven clauses were entirely political in character, and so ignored them, confining its attention to the last twenty-four, which it reduced in number to thirteen. The Council of Four considered these thirteen articles at its meeting on 6th June, Mr. Norman Davis acting as *rapporteur*. The Four having given its approval subject to one alteration, the clauses were initialled on the 16th and sent on to the Drafting Committee.³⁵ The eleven clauses not examined by the economic group were then referred to an *ad hoc* Political Clauses (Italy) Committee, consisting of one representative of each of the Four Great Powers. There were two meetings of this body, which reported seven articles to the Council of Four on 16th June.³⁶

Meanwhile notes from the Austrian Delegation commenting upon the clauses presented to them began to come in, and one of the first of these was communicated to the press and public despite the promise of confidential negotiation. This led Dr. Renner to write again to M. Clemenceau, on 12th June, recalling his reply of 31st May on this matter and stating that in future he proposed to mark 'confidential' all notes which were to be brought solely to the knowledge of the Supreme Council. All others might be communicated to the press.³⁷

Though the Council of Four gave some thought to arrangements for handling the Austrian notes, hardly anything was done at the time. On 17th June it was decided as a matter of general policy that these Austrian notes should be referred to the committees already set up to deal with the similar German notes,³⁸ but this decision does not appear to have had any immediate and tangible result. Later in June the Council of Four seems to have taken further steps to set in motion three committees, dealing with (a) Frontiers, (b) League of Nations, (c) Private Property.³⁹ The Big Four were at this stage fully occupied with the conclusion of the peace with Germany, and so not only was the draft

of the Austrian Treaty left incomplete but the Austrian comments on the completed portion were allowed to lie unanswered. There the matter remained when the leading statesmen left Paris on 28th June.

The closely related tasks of dealing with the Austrian notes and of completing the draft of the Treaty were bequeathed to the Council of Heads of Delegations, which replaced both the Council of Four and the Council of Five after the departure of the chiefs and held its first meeting on the 1st July, the vital interests of Italy being now watched over by Signor Tittoni, Foreign Minister in the new Nitti Cabinet and leader of the second Italian Delegation to the Conference. At this first meeting Mr. Lansing raised the question of replies to the Austrian notes already received, and, being apparently unaware of the tentative arrangements made by the Council of Four on the 17th June and afterwards, he brought forward a resolution on the subject.⁴⁰

This proposed that special committees of five members, one from each of the Great Powers, should be at once established, one committee to deal with each section of the Treaty, and the French member of each committee to act as convener. M. Clemenceau mentioned that what Mr. Lansing desired was already being done, but the American, still misunderstanding the position, said he was not referring to committees working to complete the Austrian Treaty but to the handling of the Austrian notes in reply. Mr. Balfour, who seems to have been better informed as to what the Four had projected, referred to the decision of 17th June to use the machinery which had served in the case of the German notes, and M. Dutasta mentioned the later decision to set three committees to work, saying that the Frontiers Committee was actually due to meet on the following day, 2nd July. Mr. Lansing indicated the probable source of the confusion in his mind when he noted that the American experts for Austrian affairs were not the same as for German, and he withdrew his resolution after these explanations had been given, it being decided that M. Dutasta should make a further report on the subject.

At this same first meeting of the Heads of Delegations Mr. Balfour noted that the Austrians had challenged the perpetuation of the Austro-Hungarian frontier of 1867, and on the following day, 2nd July, it was decided that the Frontiers Committee should report on the matter immediately. A report on this issue was

considered by the Council at its fourth meeting on 7th July, when it decided to insert in the draft a clause providing for the establishment of a Boundary Commission to effect a rectification of the frontier between Austria and Hungary.⁴¹ At this fourth meeting the Heads of Delegations also took note of the incomplete condition of the territorial clauses of the Treaty and decided to request a general report on frontiers by 9th July. The Frontiers Committee duly presented such a report, which was considered by the Council on 10th July.⁴²

In its work of supervising the general completion of the Austrian Treaty the Council was greatly assisted by a 'Committee on Political Clauses'.⁴³ An *ad hoc* body of lesser importance was nominated by the Council on 12th July to examine the Italian demand that a clause should be inserted in the draft providing for the cession to Italy of the Austrian concession in Tientsin. This body compiled a memorandum, dated 16th July, which was considered and approved by the Council on the 17th.⁴⁴

On 20th July, the draft of the Treaty having been at length completed, there was an entirely informal presentation of the full text to the Austrians, M. Dutasta appearing at noon at the villa of Dr. Renner for the purpose, accompanied by one officer from each of the English, French and Italian Missions attached to St. Germain-en-Laye.⁴⁵ The text, printed in three languages, was marked 'Proof', as in the earlier draft of 2nd June. With the draft, which was styled 'Final Text of the Peace Conditions', there was a covering letter signed by M. Clemenceau, explaining that the observations submitted by the Austrians had been taken into consideration during the preparation of the final text, into which various modifications had been introduced, and that for this reason no specific replies had been sent to the various notes of the Austrian Delegation already received. A time-limit of ten days was fixed within which the Austrians might submit further written observations,⁴⁶ this period having been decided upon by the Heads of Delegations at their second meeting, on 2nd July.⁴⁷

At this juncture political difficulties in Vienna necessitated the temporary return thither of Dr. Renner, who left Paris on the 21st and was away until the 27th. Upon his return he wrote to M. Clemenceau asking that, in view of the delay thus incurred, the time-limit for the Austrian reply should be extended by at least one week. On 30th July Dr. Renner was informed through the General Secretariat that an extension of one week had been

granted, until 1 p.m. on 6th August. On the 4th he notified Clemenceau that the Austrian reply would in fact be forthcoming in time, and the counter-proposals together with a covering letter were actually presented on 6th August.⁴⁸

On 29th July, while the Austrian reply was being awaited, the Council of the Heads of Delegations had decided that 'the various commissions and committees which handled the questions relating to the Peace Treaty with Austria' should be 'instructed to submit to the Council drafts of replies to the Austrian Notes received subsequent to the delivery of the final text'. These drafts were to be submitted for co-ordination to 'the Central Committee' which had 'already fulfilled these functions for the Treaty with Germany.'⁴⁹ On 18th August the Heads of Delegations decided that the 'Editing Committee' should confine itself to co-ordination pure and simple, except when inconsistencies in the various drafts made necessary the examination of a question on its merits. This decision was further elaborated on the 19th, when it was laid down that the Editing (or Co-ordinating) Committee was to co-ordinate the various drafts, making only verbal changes, and to submit to the Heads of Delegations annexes pointing out questions where one or more members of the Committee thought changes of substance should be made.⁵⁰

The general reply of the Allied and Associated Powers, having been approved by the Supreme Council, was delivered to Dr. Renner at St. Germain by M. Dutasta on 2nd September. The documents thus handed over consisted of: (a) a covering letter; (b) general observations; (c) the definitive text of the Treaty. Dutasta called attention to the fact that a five-day time-limit had been set for reply, whereupon Dr. Renner pointed out that an extension would be essential because he was compelled to pay another flying visit to Vienna. On 4th September Renner sent in an official request for this, and the President of the Conference announced an extension until the 9th in a note of the 5th.⁵¹

On the 6th the Austrian National Assembly voted in favour of the signing of the Treaty as it stood, since no further concessions could be obtained. On the same day Eichhoff, who had been left in charge by Dr. Renner, informed M. Clemenceau of the above decision, and the ceremonial signing of the Treaty took place at St. Germain on the following day, 10th September. An interesting feature was that the Chinese, who had refused to sign the Treaty of Versailles, now adhered to the Treaty of St. Germain in order

to secure membership of the League of Nations. The Roumanian plenipotentiaries, who were vitally affected by the settlement in central Europe, refused to sign, because of their objections to Article 60, dealing with minorities, their request for permission to sign with reservations having been rejected by the Heads of Delegations on 9th September.⁵² The Yugoslav signature was delayed, also because of minority clauses, and to meet these cases the Council of Heads of Delegations decided on 9th September that a protocol should be drafted and signed with the Treaty enabling any of the high contracting parties to sign within a limited period.⁵³ A change of Government at Belgrade caused further difficulties, and it was not until 15th September that Clemenceau announced to the Council the decision of the Yugoslav Government to sign.⁵⁴ Later, on 9th September, the Roumanians signed a declaration of adherence to the Treaty.⁵⁵

CHAPTER XVII

THE END OF THE CONFERENCE

ON the signing of the German Treaty the leading figures of the Conference separated, the Council of Four came to an end and the more important stage of the proceedings at Paris was concluded. Though much work remained to be done, what followed was of the nature of an epilogue. The Supreme Council, which, in the grand epoch of the Conference, had first taken the form of the Council of Ten and then had divided to form the Council of Four and the Council of Five, was now represented in Paris by the Council of the Heads of Delegations. This was almost identical in composition with the Council of Foreign Ministers, which held its last meeting as such on Wednesday, 25th June.¹

The new Council held its first meeting on Tuesday, 1st July, the British minutes of the meeting being headed: 'Notes of a meeting of the Heads of Delegations in M. Pichon's Room.'² On this occasion M. Clemenceau, as President of the Conference and the only Premier left in Paris, took the chair, and under his guidance there assembled Mr. Lansing, Mr. Balfour, M. Pichon, M. Loucheur, Signor Tittoni, Baron Makino and Viscount Chinda. They discussed, *inter alia*, the competence and composition of the new body.

With regard to the former point it was emphasized that, unlike those of the previous Council of Foreign Ministers, the decisions of the Heads of Delegations were to be regarded as final and not simply *ad referendum*. This was very clearly put by Mr. Balfour at the next meeting, on 2nd July, when he remarked that they were 'the lawful heirs of the Council of Four.'³

With regard to the size of the new body Mr. Lansing noted at the first meeting that France and Japan had each two delegates, whereas he, under the impression that he had been summoned to a new 'Council of Five', had not brought a second. He himself favoured an extension to form a Council of Ten since, though only one delegate from any given State would normally speak, the presence of a second delegate would mean that at any meeting there was some one *au fait* with all business and ready to deputize instantly. Mr. Balfour opposed this suggestion because, as he

put it, 'the mere presence of a large number made a physical difference. . . . Conversation was simpler and more informal at a gathering of five. Even a silent delegate interposed between each of the spokesmen cramped the conversation.'⁴ He therefore pointed to the Council of Four as an example to be followed. It was, in fact, decided as Mr. Balfour wished. The new body was to be one of five members and was, in fact, often referred to as 'The Council of Five'.

Nevertheless the third meeting of the Council, on 5th July, appears to have been an enlarged one, for the Americans classified it with the revivals of the Council of Ten that have been noted as taking place in the days of the Council of Foreign Ministers. The new body did not therefore assume its definite shape until its fourth meeting, on 7th July. The members in the early stages were M. Pichon, Mr. Balfour, Mr. Lansing, Signor Tittoni and Baron Makino, but there were afterwards numerous changes. Pichon, who acted as Chairman, attended very regularly, but he was occasionally replaced by M. Clemenceau, or, later on, by M. Jules Cambon. After the signing of the Austrian Treaty, Sir Eyre Crowe took the place of Mr. Balfour as the British delegate and Mr. Lansing was later on replaced by Mr. Polk, who was in his turn succeeded by Mr. Hugh Wallace. The Italian and Japanese membership was frequently changed. M. Mantoux was usually present as interpreter. Experts, apparently in accordance with a resolution of the third meeting, on 5th July, did not attend unless specifically requested to do so by the Chairman.⁵

In addition to the secretaries attached to each delegation, there was present a joint secretariat which was, as in the days of the Council of Ten, identical with the General Secretariat of the Conference. The departure of Sir Maurice Hankey with the British Premier was a distinct loss, and the new Council tended to resemble the old Council of Ten in that it lacked drive. The minutes, which were not stenographic, though elaborately reported, were in form very similar to those of the Council of Ten. The resolutions of the Heads of Delegations were also issued separately. At the second meeting, on 2nd July, the question of the issue of communiqués to the press was considered. Mr. Lansing wished for such publicity, but Mr. Balfour opposed, though he characteristically observed that he was indifferent 'if the communiqué was so judiciously framed as to contain no information'.⁶ His view prevailed and no communiqué was issued.

The Council of Heads of Delegations continued to meet fairly frequently, though by no means daily, until January 1920, there being 128 meetings in all.

During this second six months of the Conference its general organization bore only a slight resemblance to that of the earlier period, the absence of the great leaders from the Supreme Council being only the most important of many changes. The Supreme War Council, for example, had ceased to have any separate existence, though the Permanent Military Representatives continued to meet at Versailles, having been instructed by a decision of the Council of Four on 26th June to work out the details of control commissions not covered by the actual stipulations of the Treaty of Versailles. At the end of June also the regular meetings of the Armistice Commission at Spa ceased, the Allied section moving to Cologne and the Germans to Dusseldorf.

At the last meeting of the Council of Four, on 28th June, it was agreed that the Supreme Economic Council should continue to function during the transitional period,⁷ but the growth of American isolationism led to the early withdrawal of the United States delegates from that Council, and its frequent meetings ceased after the signing of the Treaty of Versailles. The Allied Maritime Transport Executive continued to function for some time in a limited way.

The Council of Four had decided on 25th June that the blockade of Germany should be fully raised on the ratification of the Treaty of Versailles by the Weimar Assembly.⁸ When this ratification had taken place, on 9th July, the Central Drafting Committee of the Conference was asked to pronounce upon its legality, and a report from that Committee, the members of which attended in person, pronouncing the ratification to be in order, was before the Heads of Delegations on 11th July.⁹ M. Clemenceau then announced that he had received a recommendation from the Inter-Allied Blockade Committee that the following day, 12th July, be fixed for the raising of the blockade, and this was agreed to.

There were no plenary sessions of the Inter-Allied Conference during these long closing stages, for the final Austrian draft and the text of the Bulgarian Treaty were not presented to the delegates of the minor states, formally assembled, as the German Treaty had been presented. There was, moreover, no ceremonial presentation of the completed Austrian draft to Dr. Renner's

delegation, and the various Allied and Associated States were not fully represented when the peace terms were presented to the Bulgarians in September.¹⁰

The work of the general commissions had been, for the most part, completed by the end of June, and these bodies continued to exist, if at all, in skeleton form, to be used if required to deal with further relevant points arising. The Ports, Waterways and Railways Commission was an exception to this general rule in that it was still holding regular meetings in July and August.

Most of the territorial committees continued their active existence during at least the earlier part of this closing period. The two committees dealing with Czechoslovak Affairs and Roumanian and Yugoslav Affairs respectively were very directly concerned with the completion of the Austrian and Hungarian Treaties, while the Greek and Albanian Affairs Committee was similarly concerned with the Bulgarian settlement. The Central Territorial Committee also continued to function effectively. On 19th August, for example, it was invited by the Heads of Delegations to consider the question of Vorarlberg and Lichtenstein.¹¹ It has also a great deal to do with the completion of the Bulgarian Treaty.

The case of the Polish Affairs Committee is of special interest. It had originally been appointed to receive and consider reports from the Allied Mission in Warsaw and only belatedly had it been empowered specifically to consider the frontiers of the new Polish State. By the middle of April the dual organization at Paris and Warsaw had become unwieldy, and the future method of handling Polish Affairs was then considered by the Council of Foreign Ministers on 26th April. On this occasion M. Jules Cambon attended to give a full report of the work accomplished by the Paris Committee to date, and a suggestion from Warsaw in favour of the amalgamation of the two bodies was considered. The Council decided that the Warsaw Mission should cease to exist from that date, but that Cambon's Paris Committee should be empowered to call before it individual members of the Mission as required.¹² During the last crisis of the Conference, as we have seen, the Committee had been replaced by the Eastern Frontiers Committee, charged specifically with the revision of the Germano-Polish frontier in accordance with the decisions of the Council of Four, but afterwards the Polish Committee as such resumed its functions.¹³

There was, however, some doubt as to its competence, and the British Delegation initiated a process of clarification towards the end of June. This was begun by a letter of 19th June, signed by Mr. Norman on behalf of Sir Maurice Hankey and sent to M. Dutasta, which came before the Council of Foreign Ministers at its last meeting, on 25th June. This letter pointed out that the Polish Affairs Committee had originally been established to receive and consider reports from the Warsaw Mission, which had now ceased to exist. Had the Committee now the necessary authority to deal on its own initiative with current Polish issues as they arose, as well as with the frontier questions that had later been referred to it? The British proposal was that the Committee should be explicitly authorized so to deal with general Polish issues, and coupled with this was a suggestion of an increase of size by the addition of two extra representatives from each of the Five Great Powers, so that the formation of sub-committees might be facilitated.¹⁴ The Council of Foreign Ministers decided in favour of the suggested extension of the powers of the Committee, but against the proposed fixed increase of numbers, giving instead an authorization to co-opt experts as required.¹⁵

During these later stages of the Conference the Polish Affairs Committee was mainly concerned with the eastern frontiers of Poland and with the position in eastern Galicia, where there had been much strife between Poles and Ukrainians. The Council of Ten and the Council of Four had each in turn attempted to arrange for the observance of a truce in Galicia as a preliminary to negotiations between representatives of the two peoples in Paris, and, in order to avoid any appearance of partiality, the Council of Four had provided that the initial steps should not be taken by the Polish Committee, but by a special body composed of one military and one civil delegate from each of the Four Great Powers. This body, officially styled 'The Inter-Allied Commission for the Negotiation of an Armistice between Poland and the Ukraine',¹⁶ had been unsuccessful, however, and so the whole question had now to be handled by the Polish Affairs Committee. A report of this committee on the problems of eastern Galicia was presented to the Heads of Delegations on 19th September,¹⁷ and another one, on the Russo-Polish frontier, was presented on 25th September.¹⁸ The Polish Committee also met jointly with the Czech Committee for further consideration of the problem of Teschen, the two presenting a joint report on 10th September.¹⁹

The only important standing committee of the Conference that was in full activity after 28th June was the New States and Minorities Committee, which had been established by the Council of Four (then of Three) on 1st May to 'consider the question of international obligations to be accepted by Poland and other new States to be erected by the Treaties of Peace, including the protection of racial and religious minorities',²⁰ these terms of reference being later extended to cover the States of south-east Europe that were to be so enlarged as to constitute new States in reality if not in name. The committee was usually composed of one nominee from each of the Four Great Powers, and was presided over by M. Berthelot, for whom Mr. Headlam-Morley deputized during his many absences.

During May and June this New States Committee had drafted clauses for the protection of minorities in Poland and Czechoslovakia, these clauses being embodied in treaties to be concluded between the principal Allied and Associated Powers on the one hand, and Poland and Czechoslovakia respectively on the other, and the Polish Minority Treaty had actually been signed before the great period of the Conference was over in June. The main work of the Committee afterwards was the drafting of similar treaties to be entered into by Yugoslavia, Roumania and Greece.

Various additional subordinate bodies were set to work by the Heads of Delegations to handle executive problems connected with the transition from war to peace. Matters thus referred included the supervision of the general execution of the Treaty of Versailles, the arrangements for the establishment of the permanent Reparations Commission, the conduct of negotiations between the German and Polish Governments, the repatriation of German prisoners from Russia, and the resumption of diplomatic relations with Germany. A committee of another kind was that set up in July, in accordance with a decision made at the last meeting of the Council of Foreign Ministers, to deal with the revision of the Treaties of 1839.²¹ Another body functioning at this time, which was in origin an offshoot of the Conference, having been established by the Council of Four in its closing stages, was the committee charged with the drafting of the terms of the various 'mandates' to administer extra-European territories ceded by the enemy States. This body, consisting of one delegate from each of the Great Allied Powers, held its first meeting in

Paris on 28th June, but its second meeting, on 8th July, and subsequent meetings, were held in London.²²

The main work of the Heads of Delegations, besides the conclusion of the Austrian Treaty, was the completion of the settlement with Bulgaria. At its first meeting, on 1st July, the Council decided tentatively to appoint a special committee to consider the frontiers of Bulgaria, and it was intended to take nominations on the following day. Actually, on 2nd July, it was decided instead to refer the matter to the Central Territorial Committee.²³ On 10th July the Council agreed to request all subordinate bodies dealing with matters relevant to the Bulgarian Treaty to report not later than the 25th.²⁴

By the middle of September the draft Treaty was ready for handing over to the Bulgarians, who had been kept waiting at Neuilly since the end of July. The Heads of Delegations contemplated an informal presentation by M. Dutasta, as in the case of the completed text of the Austrian Treaty on 20th July, but the Bulgarians requested a ceremonial procedure, and the matter was considered by the Council on 10th September, when it was decided to accede to the request.²⁵ On the following day the Council decided that the ceremony should take place in the *Salle de l'Horloge* at the Quai d'Orsay, and at a later meeting 19th September was chosen as the date.²⁶ There was a suggestion that the enemy plenipotentiaries should be received by representatives of the Great Powers only, but at the meeting of the Heads of Delegations on the 18th Mr. Polk urged that the delegates of the Lesser Allies should also be present, since he knew that many of them felt themselves to have been almost completely ignored at Paris. As a compromise it was resolved that there should be present at the ceremony two delegates from each of the Great Powers and one from each of the remaining Allies.²⁷ The text of the Treaty was duly presented at the Quai d'Orsay on the following day.

The Bulgarians were given a period of twenty-five days within which to make a general reply, this time-limit being later extended by ten days in answer to a Bulgarian request of 7th October, and their preliminary observations were passed on to the committee that had dealt with the German and Austrian counter-proposals.²⁸ The full Bulgarian reply was received on 24th October, and on the 25th the Council of the Heads of Delegations resolved that the Central Territorial Committee should be

responsible for the collection and co-ordination of the replies to the Bulgarian observations prepared by the various committees concerned, and this Central Committee was to present to the Council, not later than 1st November, a final and comprehensive answer.²⁹ The final reply of the Allies was presented on 5th November, and the Bulgarian Delegation was informed that it must accept the Treaty as it stood within ten days. The Bulgarian acceptance was notified on the 13th, and the actual signing, fixed for the 27th, duly took place at Neuilly.³⁰ There was an imposing ceremonial reception for the single Bulgarian delegate, Stambouliski, and, in Dr. Bowman's words, 'it looked as though the office boy had been called in for a conference with the board of directors'.³¹

Considerable progress was also made towards the completion of the Hungarian Treaty, there being on 30th July a decision by the Heads of Delegations to expedite the discussion of all matters relevant to this.³² But the internal Hungarian situation delayed the dispatch of an invitation to send delegates from Budapest to France. The Allies were unwilling to negotiate with Bela Kun and, on the 17th July, the Heads of Delegations prepared for a move against him.³³ General Franchet d'Espérey was instructed to demand his resignation and replacement by a Government 'freely elected', and on the 20th Bela Kun replied to this threat by an attack upon the Roumanians, who, as we have seen, had refused to withdraw their troops behind the provisional frontier line fixed in Paris. As hostilities developed the Council in Paris authorized the issue of a wireless message on 25th July declaring the readiness of the Allies to enter into peace negotiations with a representative Magyar Government, but when the Roumanians had entered Budapest on 8th August they showed every intention of staying in order to secure territories beyond those whose cession had been approved by the Peace Conference. The situation was further complicated by signs of differences among the Allies concerning their policy in central Europe, and not until 11th November did the Supreme Council secure the withdrawal of the Roumanian forces and so make possible the appearance of a Magyar delegation on French soil.

The Heads of Delegations were also much concerned with the enforcement of the major treaty, that with Germany, which was the keystone of the whole fabric in process of completion by the Conference. One big source of difficulty was the continued

presence of German forces under General von der Goltz in the Baltic States. The recall of der Goltz had already been demanded by the Council of Four in June, and on 27th September, in view of continued German non-compliance, the Heads of Delegations threatened economic pressure. Not until the middle of December, however, were all the German forces evacuated.³⁴

Another important matter was the inclusion in the Weimar Constitution, adopted on 31st July, of Article 61, which appeared to contravene the Treaty of Versailles in that it contemplated the eventual inclusion of Austria within the Reich, and Article 112 which stated that no German citizen should be handed over to a foreign Government for trial or punishment. The Supreme Council, having, on 2nd September, dispatched a note to the German Government demanding the nullification of Article 61, received a reply on the 5th to the effect that another clause of the Weimar Constitution (Article 178) provided that nothing in that document might override the Treaty of Versailles. A draft reply to this German note was prepared by Dr. Scott in consultation with his colleagues of the Drafting Committee, and read by Mr. Polk to the Heads of Delegations on 9th September. There was some discussion during which the question of Article 112 was also raised, and it emerged that there were differences of opinion among the legal experts themselves, a decision being postponed to the following day.³⁵

On the 10th the Council met at St. Germain after the signing of the Austrian Treaty, and a fresh draft of a reply was put forward by Mr. Balfour, while Mr. Hurst suggested that a protocol making clear the illegality of Articles 61 and 112 be presented to the Germans for signature. The Council decided that the Drafting Committee should prepare such a protocol, and also a letter embodying the points put forward by Mr. Balfour. These drafts were prepared immediately, presented to the Heads of Delegations on the following day, 11th September, and approved. On the 22nd the Germans signed a declaration stating clearly that no provision of the Weimar Constitution could have any validity if it conflicted with the Treaty of Versailles.³⁶

Two other issues were the continued failure of Germany to fulfil to the satisfaction of the Allies various clauses of the original Armistice and the desire of the Allies to secure compensation for the loss of the German ships scuttled at Scapa Flow. Because of these hitches formal ratification of the Treaty of Versailles was

long delayed. The Treaty was to come into force when ratified by Germany and three of the Principal Allied and Associated Powers. The German National Assembly had decided to ratify on 9th July, and by the middle of October France, Great Britain and Italy had also voted for ratification, but the formal deposit of ratifications was still delayed while attempts were made to get the Germans to sign a protocol dealing with the outstanding issues mentioned above, which was drawn up and sent to them on 1st November. A German Delegation headed by Herr von Simson was then invited to Paris, and arrived on 25th November, but the refusal of the American Senate to ratify the Versailles Treaty encouraged German procrastination, and the Delegation was recalled to Berlin. A series of notes followed until 8th December, when the Allies sent a demand which was virtually an ultimatum without a time-limit, M. Clemenceau meanwhile, on 3rd December, urging Polk and the remainder of the American Delegation to postpone their departure, previously fixed for the 5th.³⁷ On 15th December, the Germans conceded all the main points and the way was open for the formal deposit of ratifications in January 1920.³⁸

By the late autumn the Peace Conference had accomplished a large proportion of the tasks set before it, the settlement with Germany being ready for final ratification and the Treaties with Austria and Bulgaria having been signed. The final stages of the settlement with Hungary had yet to be reached, but the main outlines were already complete. The one really big outstanding problem was that of coming to terms with what was left of the Ottoman Empire, a problem so far almost entirely untouched by the Conference. It is true that most of the members of the British Cabinet had been over to Paris to hold a meeting on 19th May devoted to a discussion of the future of Turkey, but, since the vital issues were connected with Constantinople and the Straits, the future of which depended upon the attitude of the United States, no progress could be made.³⁹ A Turkish Delegation had indeed been allowed to come to Paris, and its leader, the Grand Vizier, Damad Ferid Pasha, had even, by a strange departure from the normal practice, been allowed to state his case before the joint session of the Councils of Four and Five on 17th June, as though he had been a representative of the Poles or the Czechs, but his only reward had been a rather stern reply, approved by the Council of Four on the 23rd. At the meeting

of the Council of Four on 25th June Lloyd George attempted to expedite the settlement of Turkish issues and suggested that 'a short sharp peace' with Turkey should be arranged while the Turkish delegates were still in Paris.⁴⁰ Nothing was done and the Turks returned home a few days later.

The Conference could not, however, be continued indefinitely, and the time came for a general stocktaking. An important meeting of the Council of the Heads of Delegations, held on 15th September, was devoted to a discussion of the future of the Conference, and Mr. Lloyd George came over to attend. M. Clemenceau also was present, the others being Mr. Polk, Signor Tittoni, and M. Matsui. The British Premier said that if the Conference were to be prolonged British representation would present considerable difficulties. Mr. Balfour could not remain longer, Lord Milner was going to Egypt, and Mr. Bonar Law was constantly needed in the House of Commons. Thus it seemed to him essential that outstanding issues should be cleared up and the Conference brought to an end at once. The Turkish Treaty could not be effectively tackled until President Wilson could state the exact position of America with regard to mandates, but it would be almost impossible to keep the Conference in continuous session until that should happen. Mr. Lloyd George thought that the Conference would have to be reconstituted later to deal with the Turkish settlement.⁴¹

The conclusion of the Bulgarian Treaty and other matters kept the Conference in being longer than was anticipated in September. Not until December was the end in sight. Then the Heads of Governments met in London from the 11th to the 13th, and the following decisions were arrived at: '(i) That the present session of the Peace Conference shall terminate by Christmas, or, at the latest, within the fifteen days following the *procès-verbal* of the deposit of the ratifications of the Peace Treaty with Germany; (ii) That at the expiration of the present session of the Peace Conference all important political questions should be handled by means of direct communications between the Governments themselves, while all questions of detail should be taken up by the Conference of Ambassadors at Paris.'⁴²

The Conference was, in accordance with these decisions, actually wound up in January 1920, the British and Italian Premiers being then present in Paris for the formalities connected with the exchange of ratifications of the Treaty of Versailles.

Their presence involved a further revival of the Council of the Heads of Governments, and the Council of Heads of Delegations as such came to an end on 10th January, the very day on which the German Treaty was brought into force. During the last days of the Conference there were at work, in accordance with the decisions of the last meeting of the Heads of Delegations,⁴³ two main bodies, as in the days of the Council of Four: (i) A Council of Heads of Governments, dealing with questions of general policy, and (ii) a Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs, which dealt in particular with the completion of the Hungarian Treaty and in general with a number of minor issues.

These two Councils brought the Paris Peace Conference to an end. Miscellaneous business connected with the winding-up process transacted by them included the following: arrangements for the extradition of William II and the trial of 'war criminals', relations with Soviet Russia, policing of plebiscite areas, establishment of the Inter-Allied Rhineland Commission, relations between Italy and Yugoslavia, and the admission of neutralized Switzerland to the League of Nations. Their main work was the directing of negotiations with the Magyar Delegation, led by Count Apponyi, which had at last arrived at Neuilly on 7th January.⁴⁴ These negotiations were not completed, however, and the Conference broke up on 21st January, leaving over not only the decision of all vital issues affecting the Turkish Treaty, but also the actual conclusion of the Hungarian Treaty.

At the meeting of the Foreign Ministers on 13th January there was an important discussion concerning the archives of the Conference, the subject arising from a note sent by the General Secretariat. This note suggested that only the protocols of the plenary sessions should be made public, while all other documents remained secret in conformity with the rules of the Conference. In the discussion that ensued there were special references to the records of the Council of Four. It was pointed out that all copies of the notes made by Professor Mantoux at the early meetings had been destroyed, except one copy kept by M. Clemenceau, and it was thought that the latter would destroy even this. Two copies of the Hankey minutes were extant, one English and one French, and it was urged that these should not be destroyed. It was eventually decided by this meeting: (a) that the English and French versions of the Hankey minutes of the Council of Four should be preserved, but kept strictly secret; (b) that the minutes

of the Council of Ten, the Council of Foreign Ministers, and the Council of the Heads of Delegations should be printed in English and French, and that ten copies of each set should be presented to each of the Five Great Allied and Associated Powers for the use of their Governments only, after which the type was to be broken up; (c) that the resolutions of the Supreme Council in its various forms should be printed in a separate series, and copies distributed to each of the Allied and Associated Powers; (d) that the records of the plenary sessions, and these alone, should be made public.⁴⁵

After the conclusion of the Conference on 21st January 1920 all matters of detail arising from the execution of the various treaties were handled by the Council of Ambassadors in Paris foreshadowed by the London resolution of 13th December. This body, which met for the first time on 26th January, was composed of the ambassadors from Britain, Italy and Japan accredited to Paris, and was presided over by M. Millerand for the first few meetings, M. Cambon afterwards taking the chair. The American Ambassador attended in the capacity of an observer. To make the vital decisions necessary to effect a settlement with Turkey and to complete the Hungarian Treaty eventually signed at the Trianon on 4th June, the Supreme Council of the Heads of Governments was revived from time to time in 1920. The main features of the Turkish Treaty were elaborated at meetings held in London and at San Remo in the spring, the final touches being given at Spa in July. We are told that the name 'Supreme Council' was not used in the official records of the Spa Conference except in connection with matters, such as the Turkish Treaty, in relation to which the Great Powers were acting as the Supreme Council of the Peace Conference.⁴⁶ This would appear to have been the last occasion on which the Great Powers did so act, and thus this was presumably the last functioning of the Supreme Council, which had emerged during the war years, concluded the Armistice, brought the Peace Conference into being, guided its labours, and even outlived it.

CHAPTER XVIII

RETROSPECT

THE Peace Conference of 1919 must certainly occupy an important place in the long succession of similar gatherings, if only because of the scale on which it was organized. Including, as it did, delegates from the United States, which was thus represented for the first time at such a conference, from the British Dominions, which thus established a vital precedent, and from Latin America as well as from Japan, the assembly of 1919 may certainly be deemed a world peace conference, the first of its kind. Its executive body did indeed function for a time, however inadequately, as a cabinet directing the affairs of a great part of the globe, and the magnitude of its task undoubtedly surpassed that of any set before a previous conference. An unfortunate gap, inevitable in the circumstances of that time, was caused by the absence of any delegates from Russia, which thus had no share in the shaping of the settlement, the character and durability of this being thereby profoundly affected.

The European conferences of the past two and a half centuries had made use of French as their official language, in accordance with well-established tradition. As an effective medium of world diplomacy, however, the usefulness of the English language was now clearly demonstrated and, largely owing to pressure from the Americans, its recognition as at least the official equal of the traditional French was gradually conceded. In the days of the Council of Four, English became almost the sole means of exchanging views, and it may well be that an important precedent was thus established.

Naturally the various delegations, from the major States in particular, were of a size proportionate to the general shape of the Conference and the greatness of its task. While Castlereagh, in 1814, had taken with him to Vienna a rather inadequate staff of less than twenty, Mr. Lloyd George led to Paris a British Empire Delegation of over two hundred. A marked feature was the large amount of expert advice on almost every topic available for the use of the statesmen at Paris, this being the result of departmental preparation on an unprecedented scale, notably in Britain and the

United States. Professional diplomats were somewhat overshadowed by the military, and economic experts were present in force. The successful handling of these large staffs was another very noteworthy feature, the detailed internal organization of some of the major delegations being particularly thorough. Precautionary arrangements were almost excessively elaborate, the British, for example, going to the length of taking with them to the Hôtel Majestic a staff of servants from hotels at home, complete except for the lift-man.

The Paris Conference also inherited an elaborate organization built up for the purposes of waging war and having unparalleled scope, especially in the military and economic spheres. This was marked by general elasticity, a feature which obviously rendered it capable of further adaptation and expansion for the purposes of peace-making. Together with this organization the Conference also inherited a business-like secretarial procedure quite new in the annals of diplomacy. Both the elasticity of organization and the new procedure were very largely derived from British sources, and it is possible to trace a direct line of descent from the Committee of Imperial Defence, through the British War Cabinet and the Inter-Allied machinery of the war years, to the Supreme Council of the Conference in its various forms, the link being Sir Maurice Hankey.

Yet, in spite of all its potentialities, it is possible that the Conference will be marked down in history as a failure. The settlement which it arranged was fundamentally European, a fact which became very apparent through the defection of the United States. It was necessary to hold a separate conference at Washington in 1921 to secure a ten-year period of stability in the Pacific. The European arrangements made at Paris endured rather longer, but, partly through the absence of Russia, they were unstable, and within twenty years had been completely upset, the defeated enemy of 1919 once more dominating the Continent. It may reasonably be held that the failures of 1919 were largely due to factors beyond the control of any statesman of the time: the immaturity of American policy and the social upheaval in Russia. Yet, had there been a firmer grasp of realities and a more methodical tackling of problems as they arose, more might have been achieved. Some, at any rate, of the blame for the shortcomings of the settlement must be ascribed to faulty procedure.

Many of the difficulties facing the statesmen of the time and many of the mistakes which they made may be ascribed to their lack of any grand strategic plan to cover the process of peace-making. Planning there had been in plenty, but of a purely departmental nature, (and the Heads of Governments had never devoted themselves to the co-ordination of the plans that were being made.) Their failure to do this, due partly to their pre-occupation with the day-to-day conduct of the war, partly to a reluctance to come to grips with issues that might divide and partly to the difficulty of foreseeing what situations might arise at the close of hostilities, was due to a very incomplete realization of the fact that the state of emergency would not end with the fighting, and that the task of making a satisfactory peace must call for a concentration and direction of effort on a scale equal to that previously required for the successful prosecution of the war. Thus the Great Allied and Associated Powers, finding themselves in the autumn of 1918 in possession of unparalleled military and economic power, were quite unprepared to make full and immediate use of the tremendous opportunity presenting itself. This state of unpreparedness affected the political, military and economic spheres.

The German request for an armistice at the beginning of October found the Allied and Associated Powers lacking any agreement as to their war aims, or as to the machinery of peace-making, and the enemy approach to Washington was in part made in the hope of causing a breach between America and the European States. The failure of Berlin to achieve this was due to the success of American diplomacy in securing an eleventh-hour agreement on the basis of the Fourteen Points, but this agreement, largely because of the circumstances under which it was reached, did not prove to be a satisfactory basis for the making of the peace, while its phraseology was so vague that the Germans were by no means certain of the political terms of their surrender. To say that they had only themselves to blame, for laying down their arms without asking for a further definition of clauses which they knew to be vague, is to fail to perceive in this omission a deliberate move in the political manœuvring to which the enemy resorted when beaten in the field. That the victors in the military sphere failed to counter this diplomatic astuteness by forwarding the Cobb-Lippmann interpretation of the Wilsonian Points to the Germans must be ascribed to the haste with which,

owing to lack of preparation, all these matters had to be arranged, and to the fact that the proceedings were in the hands of leaders, who were amateurs in diplomacy.

The military terms that were to govern the transition period, and which were embodied in the Armistices, were likewise drafted in haste, and by the High Command rather than by the Supreme War Council. They were thus in no way related to the Fourteen Points and, in fact, seemed to be designed to facilitate the realization of the general aims of Marshal Foch. Moreover, these military arrangements were inadequate to secure the essential basis of security that the peace terms would be accepted. They were based upon the supposition that a preliminary settlement of outstanding issues would be speedily imposed upon the enemy by the victors, who would remain fully armed until this was done. The long delays, and the rapidity of Anglo-American demobilization during the weeks following the end of the fighting destroyed the foundations upon which the military calculations of Marshal Foch had been based and caused anxieties that would have been avoided by ensuring the dovetailing of military and political strategy.

In the economic sphere the rehabilitation of central and eastern Europe was a matter of extreme urgency, and yet the enforcement of the will of the Allies was allowed to depend partly upon the continuance of the blockade, this feature becoming the more pronounced as Anglo-American military demobilization proceeded. Moreover, though the key to the whole problem of provisioning the Continent was shipping, the British proposal that the German mercantile marine should be handed over to be operated by the Allied Maritime Transport Council was not included in the terms of the Armistice, and not until four months afterwards were any economic arrangements made that could be regarded as even partially adequate.

Thus entering upon the processes of peace-making without satisfactory political, military or economic bases, the leaders of the Allied and Associated Powers of 1918 were also by no means clear as to the main lines of those processes. There was, for example, neither before the Armistices nor for more than three months afterwards, any agreement as to the number of treaties that were to be arranged. Was there to be a general collective treaty to embody the plans for a new international order? Was a separate treaty of peace to be concluded with each of the

defeated enemy States? With what portions of the disintegrating Habsburg and Ottoman Empires were the victors to deal? These questions were not squarely faced before February, and even then the arrangement of a separate treaty with Hungary was not specifically provided for. The lack of a comprehensive plan of action showed itself especially in the confusion concerning the idea of a preliminary peace, which was a thread running through the whole pattern of the Conference. The desirability of such a preliminary settlement was often affirmed and was indeed suggested by the very name of the Conference, but no effective steps were ever taken towards its realization. Such confusion as to procedure must surely be very largely ascribed to the fact that control was in the hands of men whose knowledge of diplomatic forms and precedents was very slight.

A most serious error on the part of the victorious Allies of 1918 was their failure to make immediate use of the elaborate war-organization which they had built up. They had never, as far as we can judge, seriously considered the part that this was to play in the making of the peace. In consequence the Supreme War Council did not even play the part it should have played in the drafting of the military and naval terms of the Armistices, and after the fighting had ceased its machinery was allowed to lapse into inactivity for many weeks. In particular, the failure to continue and develop the economic controls of the war years, and the hasty return to the methods of *laissez-faire*, had unfortunate results.

The chief consequence of all the unpreparedness, lack of foresight and premature relaxation on the part of the victorious States was the long delay of four months that came between the Armistices and the serious tackling of the big problems of peace-making. Two of these four months went by before even the first meeting of the Conference was held; two months during which the Great Allied and Associated Powers decided to summon to that Conference representatives of all the minor States before even the outline of a settlement had been sketched. This was their greatest procedural mistake. ✓

The second two months saw the Conference in being and the Supreme Council successfully controlling its developing structure, but, overwhelmed with accumulated executive work, entirely failing to deal with the crucial issues that it had specifically reserved for its own handling. The shortcomings of this period

were largely due to the biggest mistake of the Allies in the sphere of organization, their establishment of the rigid and rather unwieldy Council of Ten without any steering committee of Heads of Governments to guide it. Not until the middle of March did the Supreme Council return to the precedents and procedure of war-time and find, in its sub-division as the Councils of Four and Five, the form in which it was to make rapid progress towards its goal. By that time, unfortunately, all chance of a preliminary settlement with Germany had gone by, and the political and economic disintegration of the Continent had proceeded far.

An unfortunate result of the failure of the Supreme Council to lay down guiding principles during the early stages at Paris was the faulty handling of the large body of experts attached to the various delegations. For the first few weeks the services of these experts were hardly utilized at all, and then, when they were set to work, it was without any satisfactory guidance, especially in the territorial sphere. Thus the Territorial Committees became a law unto themselves, and the lack of any arrangements for the effective revision and co-ordination of their work was most unfortunate. This was a characteristic defect, for, though within the various delegations the machinery for co-ordinating the activities of the sub-sections was generally satisfactory, of the Conference as a whole this could not be said.

These errors on the part of those responsible for making the settlement of 1919 have been over-emphasized of late, but, if the pendulum has indeed swung too far in this direction, its swing is the measure of the disappointment of the high hopes raised at the time by the leading statesmen themselves, some of whom also invited future criticism by their expressed scorn for all the experience of the past and in particular for the precedents of the Congress of Vienna, a careful study of which would have taught the vital importance of organization and procedure. Yet these statesmen of Paris, grappling with tasks of unprecedented magnitude, did, even through their failures, place posterity in their debt, for, if their successors have somewhat less scorn for precedent, they may learn much from a careful study of the achievements and mistakes of 1919, the first lesson being that the process of making a peace is only slightly less important than the winning of a war.

CHRONOLOGY

- 1918
- Sept. 29. Bulgarian Armistice.
- Oct. 4. First German and Austro-Hungarian Notes dispatched to Washington via Switzerland.
5. Beginning of October consultations in Paris and at Versailles.
8. American reply to first German Note.
9. Memorandum to Washington, concerning possible bases for an armistice, approved by S.W.C.
12. Second German Note to Washington.
14. American reply to Second German Note.
- Turkish Note to Washington.
17. Departure of Colonel House for Europe.
18. American reply to First Austro-Hungarian Note.
20. Third German Note to Washington.
23. American reply to Third German Note, indicating official forwarding of correspondence to Allies.
25. Conference of Foch and Allied Commanders-in-Chief at Senlis.
26. Arrival of House in Paris.
27. Fourth German Note and Second Austro-Hungarian Note to Washington.
- Preliminary conversations in Paris.
29. Text of Cobb-Lippmann Document cabled to Wilson.
30. Turkish Armistice concluded at Mudros.
- Wilson approval of Cobb-Lippmann Document.
31. Beginning of formal meetings of November Session of S.W.C.
- Nov. 3. Conclusion of Austro-Hungarian Armistice at Villa Giusti.
4. Final decisions of S.W.C. concerning armistice terms and procedure.
5. 'Lansing Note' to Germany.
8. Germans received armistice terms at Rethondes.
9. German Republic proclaimed in Berlin.
11. German Armistice.
13. Military Convention with Hungary.
15. First draft of French November Plan.
19. D. H. Miller arrived in Paris.
21. Second draft of November Plan.
26. Cambon Memorandum concerning frontiers of 1814, etc.
27. First Foch Rhineland Memorandum.

- Nov. 29. Official version of November Plan presented in Washington by Jusserand.
30. Informal Anglo-French conversations in London.
- Dec. 2. Opening of London Conference. Decision to hold Inter-Allied Conference at Paris or Versailles.
4. President Wilson sailed for Europe with American Delegation.
10. Meeting of American experts aboard the *George Washington*.
11. British Note to Quai d'Orsay concerning membership of the Conference.
13. Pichon Scheme forwarded to London.
First renewal of German Armistice.
Arrival of Wilson in France.
14. British General Election.
26. President Wilson in London.
- 1919
- Jan. 3. Wilson in Rome.
4. Arrival of Sir Eyre Crowe and F.O. Officials in Paris.
5. Tardieu Plan for the Conference.
10. Second Foch Rhineland Memorandum.
11. Arrival of Lloyd George and Dominion Premiers in Paris.
12. Informal opening of Conference at Quai d'Orsay.
Meeting of Council for Supply and Relief.
13. Japanese delegates joined Supreme Council, which thus became the Council of Ten.
First meeting of British Empire Delegation.
16. Second renewal of German Armistice.
Resolutions of Press Committee demanding publicity.
18. First plenary session: election of officers, etc.
21. Report of American experts to Wilson concerning the Adriatic question.
22. Decisions of Council of Ten to send Inter-Allied Mission to Warsaw and to establish a League of Nations Commission.
Approval of Wilson draft proclamation inviting Russians to Prinkipo.
23. Council of Ten adopted resolutions for the establishment of four additional commissions: International Labour, Reparations, War Responsibility, Ports, etc.
Decision to set up Financial Drafting Committee.
Limit of ten days for sending in territorial claims fixed.
24. Loucheur Committee appointed.
Dominion Premiers before Council of Ten.
25. Second plenary session: formal approval of five General Commissions.

- Jan. 27. Meeting of Lesser Allied and Associated States to choose representatives for the commissions.
Decision of Ten to set up Economics Drafting Committee.
Makino presented Japanese Pacific claims at meeting of the Council.
28. Wellington Koo stated China's case concerning Shantung to the Council of Ten.
Further discussions of the colonial question.
29. Polish and Czech delegates before Council of Ten to give views on problem of Teschen.
Smuts 'mandate' compromise drafted.
Important conversations of Wilson with American experts and with House concerning territorial procedure.
30. Angry exchanges between Wilson and Hughes at meeting of Council of Ten; mandate compromise accepted in principle.
Statement of Belgian African claims before Council of Ten.
31. Decision of Council to send Inter-Allied Mission to Teschen.
- Feb. 1. New territorial procedure inaugurated by Council of Ten; establishment of Roumanian Affairs (Banat) Committee, after hearing of Roumanians by Council.
4. Greek Affairs Committee established.
5. Czechoslovak Affairs Committee established.
7. Report of Loucheur Committee before S.W.C.; Tardieu Committee set up to produce further report at once.
8. Lloyd George returned to London.
S.W.C. received report of Tardieu Committee and also report of Naval Peace Terms Committee.
Decision to establish Supreme Economic Council.
10. Establishment of Joint Military and Economic Committee.
12. Report of Joint Committee presented to S.W.C.
Decisions of Council:—(a) to renew German Armistice for an indefinite period terminable at short notice; (b) to establish Military, Naval and Air Committee charged with preparation of final terms.
Decisions of Council of Ten to establish Belgian Affairs Committee and also Polish Affairs (Paris) Committee.
13. Preparation of final 'military' terms for Austria-Hungary referred to Military, Naval and Air Committee.
14. Third plenary session: adoption of provisional draft of League Covenant.
15. Departure of President Wilson for Washington.
16. Third and final renewal of German Armistice.

- Feb. 18. Serbian (Yugoslav) territorial claims referred to Roumanian Affairs (Banat) Committee.
Foch Memorandum concerning a preliminary peace.
19. Wounding of Clemenceau.
21. Pichon voted to chair of Council of Ten in absence of Clemenceau.
Report of Economics Drafting Committee before Council; decision to establish Economics Commission.
Danish claims referred to Belgian Affairs Committee.
Important joint meeting of Anglo-American territorial experts at the Crillon.
22. Balfour Resolution, relating to preliminary peace terms, before Council of Ten.
24. Adoption by Council of separate resolutions relating to the speedy preparation of preliminary terms for Germany, Austria-Hungary, Turkey and Bulgaria.
Albanian claims referred to Greek Affairs Committee.
25. Tardieu Rhineland Memorandum.
26. Problem of Germano-Polish frontier referred to Polish (Paris) Committee.
27. Establishment of Central Territorial Committee.
- March 1. Return of Clemenceau.
Further report of Economics Drafting Committee (with regard to structure of proposed Economics Commission) and report of Financial Drafting Committee before Council of Ten; establishment of Economics and Financial Commissions.
Refusal of Council to give guidance to the Reparations Commission with regard to the inclusion of War costs, pending return of Wilson.
3. Meeting of Lesser Allies and Associates to choose representatives for Economics and Financial Commissions; demands for increased representation held up proceedings. Report of Military, Naval and Air Committee received by S.W.C. but referred back for co-ordination.
5. Refusal by Council of Ten of demands of Small Powers. Belgian request for representation on Supreme Council during discussions of preliminary peace terms answered by reference to participation formula in Rules of Procedure. Lloyd George back in Paris.
6. Co-ordinated report of the Military, Naval and Air Committee before the S.W.C.; severe criticism of military terms by Lloyd George; Kiel Canal clause of naval section referred to sub-section of Ports, Waterways and Railways Commission.

- March 6. Further meeting of Small Powers to choose members of Economics and Financial Commissions resulted in 'packing' by Latin-American countries.
7. Important morning conversations at the Ministry of War between Clemenceau, Lloyd George and House concerning military terms.
Afternoon meeting of S.W.C. approved new bases for military clauses agreed upon in morning.
Clause of naval section relating to submarine cables referred to a special committee.
8. Report of Belgian Affairs Committee concerning procedure for revision of Treaties of 1839 approved by Council of Ten.
10. Morning meeting of Clemenceau, Lloyd George and House at the Ministry of War; establishment of two *ad hoc* committees to consider problems of Germany's Western Frontier and Reparations respectively.
Nomination by Supreme Council of Small Powers to be represented on Economics and Financial Commissions.
Revised military draft accepted in general by the S.W.C. and referred to special Military, Naval and Air Drafting Committee.
12. Draft of air clauses also referred to special Drafting Committee.
Decision of Council of Ten to establish Aviation Commission.
14. Return of President Wilson to Paris, followed by meeting with Clemenceau and Lloyd George at the Crillon; offer of Anglo-American guarantee to France; discussion of Reparations problem.
Brussels Agreement concerning handing over of German mercantile marine and feeding of Germany.
15. Brief meeting of Supreme Council, which was unable to make progress because of continued absence of Wilson.
Nomination by the Council of Lesser Allies and Associates to be represented on the Aviation Commission.
16. Rift in American Delegation foreshadowed by letter from Mezes to House, running counter to the general views of Inquiry concerning the Italian question.
17. Return of Wilson to the Supreme Council; lengthy discussion of complete draft of military, naval and air terms for Germany, followed by approval with reservations of clauses relating to Kiel Canal (Article 38) and submarine cables (Article 40).
Fromageot, on behalf of Central Drafting Committee,

asked for guidance as to the form in which these terms were to be presented.

- March 17. Formal letter to Lloyd George, signed by Wilson, Clemenceau and Orlando, requesting him to remain for the approaching settlement of vital issues.
Second Tardieu Rhineland Memorandum. •
18. Further informal meeting of Wilson, Clemenceau and Lloyd George for examination of problem of Reparations with experts.
Scott-Miller Memorandum concerning the procedure of peace-making in relation to the Constitution of the United States.
19. Report of Polish Affairs Committee on the Germano-Polish frontier referred back by the Council of Ten after vigorous criticism by Lloyd George.
Decision of Council to send telegrams to Polish and Ukrainian commanders ordering cessation of hostilities.
20. Special meeting of Premiers and Foreign Ministers to consider Turkish problems; decision in favour of sending mission to Syria.
21. Meetings of the Council of Ten at 3 p.m. and 6 p.m.; long discussion concerning transport of Haller's Polish Army from France at afternoon meeting; in evening strong protest from Lloyd George against leakages of information about previous meeting.
Seizure of power in Budapest by Bela Kun.
22. Polish Committee Report back unchanged before Council of Ten; issue shelved.
Report from Warsaw of breakdown of negotiations with Germans with regard to Haller.
Lloyd George went to Fontainebleau.
24. Return of Lloyd George.
Last regular meeting of the Council of Ten at 4 p.m. preceded by first meeting of Council of Four at 3 p.m.
27. First meeting of Council of Foreign Ministers.
28. Council of Four facing crisis concerning Saar, Rhineland and Reparations; Clemenceau left meeting in disgust.
Council of Foreign Ministers began its examination of reports of Territorial Committees with report of Danish Affairs Committee.
31. Smuts paper defending the inclusion of pensions, etc., among Reparations categories.
Further Foch Rhineland Memorandum.
- April 1. Decision of Council of Four to appoint committee to arrange armistice between Poles and Ukrainians.

April

1. Report of Czechoslovak Affairs Committee on Germano-Czech frontier before Foreign Ministers.
Issue of official 'Composition et Fonctionnement' of the Conference.
2. Saar Committee appointed to draft provisions for safeguarding French working of mines.
3. Illness of Wilson involved absence from Council of Four.
4. Memorandum of protest by five American experts to Wilson against views of House and Mezes on Adriatic question.
5. General agreement reached concerning powers of the Permanent Reparations Commission.
6. Report of Saar Committee urged necessity of establishing a special régime.
7. Date by which all reports affecting German settlement had to be handed in.
8. Return of Wilson to Council of Four.
9. Wilson conceded principle of special régime in Saar; experts set to work out details.
10. Saar clauses as prepared by experts generally approved by Council of Four.
11. Fourth plenary session; presentation of scheme for I.L.O.
13. Decision to invite Germans to Versailles.
14. Wilson accepted fifteen year occupation of Rhineland.
Lloyd George returned to London to face critics in Commons.
16. Lloyd George attack on Northcliffe press in Commons debate.
Polish-Ukrainian Armistice Committee set up.
Joint session of Councils of Four and Foreign Ministers;
ad hoc Kiel Canal Committee appointed.
American experts completed draft of Danzig clauses.
17. Lloyd George back again.
Further protest of American experts against views of Mezes group regarding Adriatic.
18. Invitation to Versailles received in Berlin.
19. Beginning of formal minutes of Council of Four in 'I.C. "A"' Series.
21. Meeting of Premiers and Foreign Ministers from States parties to Treaty of London to discuss Italian claims in Adriatic, followed by meeting of Supreme Council without Orlando.
22. Japanese claims in Shantung examined by Council, which gave hearing to Chinese; problem referred to experts.

- April 22. Lloyd George accepted prolonged military occupation of Rhineland.
Danzig clauses approved by Council.
23. Complete deadlock concerning Adriatic; public statement by President Wilson.
Keynes Plan for economic reconstruction.
24. Orlando left Paris for Rome.
25. Experts' report on Shantung before Council of Three.
26. Decision of Council of Foreign Ministers to amalgamate Warsaw Mission and Polish Affairs (Paris) Committee.
Departure of Sonnino.
28. Japanese claims in Shantung accepted in general by Council of Three.
Fifth plenary session; approval of final draft of League Covenant and of Labour Charter.
29. Arrival of German plenipotentiaries at Versailles.
30. Settlement of Shantung issues.
- May 1. Exchange of credentials with Germans.
Decision of Council of Three to set up New States and Minorities Committee.
Joint session of Councils of Three and Foreign Ministers; discussion of submarine cables.
2. Further joint session; continuation of above discussion.
5. Decision of Council of Three to establish committees to handle German observations and counter-proposals.
6. Sixth plenary session; to receive summary of draft German Treaty.
Return of Orlando and Sonnino to Paris.
7. Presentation of text of treaty to Germans at Versailles; time-limit of fifteen days fixed for presentation of general reply.
Granting of first 'mandates'.
8. Beginning of separate 'C.F.' Series of minutes of Council of Four.
Hungarian frontiers considered by Council of Foreign Ministers.
9. Austrian frontiers examined.
10. Special consideration of Austro-Yugoslav frontier in regions of Klagenfurt and Tarvis.
12. Date by which all reports affecting Austrian treaty were to be handed in.
Joint session of Councils of Four and Five for general consideration of the frontiers of Austria and Hungary.
14. Arrival of Austrian plenipotentiaries at St. Germain-en-Laye.

- May 16. Consideration of Bulgarian frontiers by Council of Foreign Ministers.
18. First meeting between chief German delegates and leading members of the German Government at Spa.
19. Exchange of credentials with Austrians.
Meeting of Foreign Ministers to consider revision of Treaties of 1839, with Belgian and Dutch representatives participating.
20. Continuation of above meeting.
Brockdorff-Rantzau secured an additional seven days for preparation of counter-proposals.
22. Further meeting at Spa.
24. Dr. Renner, leader of Austrian Delegation, asked for speedy opening of negotiations.
29. Presentation of German counter-proposals together with covering letter.
Seventh plenary session; presentation of summary of incomplete draft of Austrian Treaty; demand of Bratianu for delay of forty-eight hours conceded.
D. H. Miller left Paris.
31. Eighth plenary session; further consideration of Austrian draft.
Meeting of British Cabinet in Paris to consider revision of German Treaty.
- June 1. Joint meetings of British Empire Delegation and the Cabinet.
2. Continuation of these meetings.
Presentation in proof form of incomplete draft to Austrians at St. Germain.
3. Full meeting of the American Delegation at the Crillon to discuss revision of German Treaty.
Further meeting of Council of Foreign Ministers together with Belgians and Dutch for consideration of Treaties of 1839.
4. Council of Four established Eastern Frontiers Committee to revise Polish section of German Treaty by drafting of clauses providing for plebiscite in Upper Silesia.
All committees preparing replies to German counter-proposals requested to report by 9th June.
Council of Foreign Ministers decides in favour of establishment of special committee to deal with revision of Treaties of 1839.
5. Paderewski stated Polish view with regard to Upper Silesia before Council of Four.
10. Council of Four received message from Bela Kun intimating his readiness to enter upon peace negotiations.

- June 11. Report of Eastern Frontiers Committee before Council; approval of clauses governing plebiscite.
Meeting of Council of Foreign Ministers to inform Roumanians and Czechoslovaks of frontiers provisionally fixed for Hungary.
12. Council of Foreign Ministers met to answer questions of the Big Four concerning Hungarian frontier procedure.
Council of Four instructed Drafting Committee with regard to revision of clauses relating to Germano-Polish frontier.
13. Draft of covering letter to accompany Allied reply to the Germans approved by Council of Four.
Bela Kun ordered to withdraw forces behind new frontier lines.
16. General reply of Allied and Associated Powers to German counter-proposals handed over by Dutasta.
Time-limit of three days fixed for acceptance, this being extended to five on request.
17. Joint session of Councils of Four and Five to hear statement from Grand Vizier, leader of Turkish Delegation.
Decision of Four that notes from Austrians should be handled by committees already set up to deal with German notes.
18. Council of Four demanded early evacuation of Baltic regions by forces of von der Goltz.
19. Brockdorff-Rantzau, having returned to Germany for consultations, advocated rejection of Allied terms.
Defeat of Orlando-Sonnino Government in Rome.
20. Resignation of Brockdorff-Rantzau.
Further two-day extension of time-limit for German acceptance.
21. Scuttling of German fleet at Scapa Flow.
22. Weimar National Assembly voted for acceptance of Treaty with reservations concerning Articles 227 to 231, Haniel von Haimhausen (left in charge at Versailles) being vested with necessary authority to negotiate.
Allied rejection of German reservations.
23. Refusal of another German request for extension of time-limit (due to expire at 7 p.m. on this date).
German acceptance of terms announced at Versailles about 5.30 p.m.
Reply to Turkish Delegation approved by Council of Four.
25. Last meeting of Council of Foreign Ministers; extension of powers of Polish Affairs Committee to cover executive matters approved by Council.

- June 26. Dutch approval of suggestion of special committee to consider Treaties of 1839 notified.
 Haniel von Haimhausen informed Allies of names of German plenipotentiaries for signature of Treaty.
28. Last meeting of Council of Four.
 Signing of Treaty of Versailles (together with Supplementary Protocol), French Guarantee Pacts and Polish Minority Treaty.
 Departure of Wilson and Lloyd George.
 Coming of Tittoni at head of new Italian Delegation.
- July 1. First meeting of Council of Heads of Delegations.
 9. Ratification of Treaty of Versailles by Weimar National Assembly.
 10. Report of Aviation Commission, including General Aviation Convention, submitted to Heads of Delegations.
 12. Blockade of Germany raised.
 17. Decision of Heads of Delegations to move against Bela Kun.
 20. Informal presentation of completed text of Austrian Treaty, with time-limit of ten days for further observations.
 Bela Kun attacked Roumanians.
 30. Austrian time-limit extended to 6th August.
- August 1. Fall of Bela Kun.
 6. Presentation of Austrian counter-proposals.
 8. Roumanians entered Budapest.
- Sept. 2. General reply of Allied and Associated Powers to Austrian counter-proposals presented, with five-day limit for acceptance.
 Bulgarian request for early opening of negotiations.
 5. Austrian time-limit extended to 9th.
 6. Austrian National Assembly voted for acceptance.
 10. Signing of Treaty of St. Germain and Czechoslovak Minorities Treaty.
 15. Clemenceau and Lloyd George present at meeting of Heads of Delegations for discussion of future of the Conference.
 19. Presentation of draft Treaty to Bulgarians.
 22. German signature of declaration nullifying any clause of the Weimar Constitution conflicting with Treaty of Versailles.
 27. Decision to apply economic pressure to secure evacuation of Baltic region by forces of General von der Goltz.
- Oct. 24. Bulgarian counter-proposals received.
 25. Council of Heads of Delegations requested Central Territorial Committee to collect and co-ordinate material for reply to Bulgarians.

- Nov. 1. Allied request for German delegates to come to Paris with full powers to sign protocol covering compensation for scuttling of fleet, etc.
3. Presentation of reply of Allied and Associated Powers to Bulgarians; acceptance of terms within ten days demanded.
11. Roumanian withdrawal from Budapest.
13. Bulgarian acceptance of final terms notified.
25. Herr von Simson arrived in Paris at head of delegation charged with negotiations concerning compensation for scuttled ships, etc.; return to Berlin followed after few days of abortive exchanges.
26. New Magyar Government approved by Allied and Associated Powers.
27. Signing of Bulgarian Treaty at Neuilly.
- Dec. 1. Magyars invited to send plenipotentiaries to Neuilly.
5. Signing of Yugoslav Minorities Treaty.
8. Allied demand for German acceptance of draft protocol though no time-limit fixed.
9. Roumanians adhered to Austrian Treaty and signed Minorities Treaty.
11. Clemenceau in London for important conversations with Lloyd George, Balfour and Curzon, lasting until 13th.
15. Conciliatory German reply to Allied demand of 8th.
- 1920
- Jan. 5. Arrival of Nitti and Scialoja in London for conversations.
7. Magyar Delegation arrived at Neuilly.
8. Lloyd George, Curzon and Bonar Law, together with Nitti and Scialoja, left London for winding-up of Conference in Paris.
10. Exchange of ratifications bringing Treaty of Versailles into force.
- Signing of protocol relating to compensation for lost warships, etc.
13. Decisions concerning archives of the Conference.
14. Exchange of credentials with Magyars.
15. Official request for extradition of ex-Kaiser.
- Apponyi, leader of Magyar Delegation, received draft terms; counter-proposals to be presented within fifteen days.
16. Apponyi before Supreme Council to make observations concerning draft Treaty.
18. Greater part of Magyar Delegation returned to Budapest, leaving residue in charge of Praznovszky.

- Jan. 21. End of Peace Conference; Lloyd George and Nitti leave Paris.
26. First meeting of Council of Ambassadors.
Magyar request for extension of time-limit until 12th February granted.
- Feb. 3. Demand for handing-over of 'war criminals' presented to Germans.
12. Revival of Supreme Council in London; general framework of Turkish Treaty decided upon during meetings lasting until 23rd.
Return of Magyars to Neuilly to present first instalment of their reply to the Allies.
13. Allies accept German suggestion of trial of 'war criminals' at Leipzig.
- March 16. Allied occupation of Constantinople.
31. Apponyi and most of Magyar delegates returned to Budapest as before.
- April 8. Residue of Magyar Delegation removed from Neuilly to Versailles.
19. Revival of Supreme Council at San Remo to complete work upon Turkish Treaty.
- May 6. Reply of Allied and associated Powers to Magyars, coupled with demand for acceptance of final terms within ten days, time-limit being later extended to 21st.
9. Arrival of Praznovszky, left again in charge of residue in France, in Budapest with final terms of Allies.
11. Draft terms presented to the Grand Vizier, leader of Turkish Delegation.
21. Decision of new Magyar Government to accept the terms notified at Versailles.
- June 4. Signing of the Treaty of the Trianon.
21. Revival of Supreme Council at Boulogne; meetings continued on following day.
- July 5. Last revival of the Supreme Council of the Conference at Spa: meetings lasted until 16th.
- August 10. Signing of Treaty of Sèvres.

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CHAPTER XI. PRELIMINARY PEACE?

¹ Appendix D. ² Lapradelle, V, 20. ³ Miller, XV, 5. ⁴ op. cit., XIV, 340. ⁵ op. cit., XIV, 292-9. ⁶ Chapter III. ⁷ Lapradelle, VII,

350. ⁸ Miller (*Covenant*), I, 93. ⁹ Lloyd George, I, 392-3. ¹⁰ op. cit., I, 390-2. ¹¹ House, IV, 343-5. ¹² Lloyd George, I, 390. ¹³ op. cit., I, 392. ¹⁴ Tardieu, 147-67. ¹⁵ Lansing (*Personal Narrative*), 185-6. ¹⁶ House, IV, 340-1. ¹⁷ Miller, XIV, 502. ¹⁸ House, IV, 342. ¹⁹ Miller, XV, 5-6. ²⁰ op. cit., XIV, 517. ²¹ House, IV, 345-6. ²² Miller, X, 3-4. ²³ op. cit., XV, 9. ²⁴ op. cit., XV, 12. ²⁵ op. cit., XV, 36. ²⁶ op. cit., XV, 26-7. ²⁷ House, IV, 351. ²⁸ Miller, XV, 19-20. ²⁹ op. cit., XV, 3. ³⁰ op. cit., XV, 10. ³¹ House, IV, 377 sqq. ³² op. cit., IV, 345-6. ³³ Miller, XV, 28. ³⁴ op. cit., XV, 36. ³⁵ op. cit., XV, 51-2. ³⁶ op. cit., XV, 53-4. ³⁷ op. cit., XV, 54. ³⁸ op. cit., XV, 55. ³⁹ Lansing (*Personal Narrative*), 185-6. ⁴⁰ House, IV, 340. ⁴¹ Birdsall, 201. ⁴² Miller, XIV, 377. ⁴³ Baker, I, Chapter XVII; House, IV, 377 sqq.; J.M.H., I, 619-21. ⁴⁴ Miller (*Covenant*), I, 91. ⁴⁵ Miller, XV, 36-9. ⁴⁶ op. cit., XV, 125 and 132. ⁴⁷ op. cit., XV, 75. ⁴⁸ op. cit., XV, 127-8. ⁴⁹ Lapradelle, V, 79. ⁵⁰ op. cit., III, 254 and 320. ⁵¹ op. cit., IV (i), 173. ⁵² op. cit., VII, 383-4. ⁵³ op. cit., VII, 10. ⁵⁴ Miller, XV, 352. ⁵⁵ Lapradelle, VI, 70. ⁵⁶ op. cit., VI, 92. ⁵⁷ op. cit., VI, 115. ⁵⁸ op. cit., IV (ii), 901. ⁵⁹ Luckau, 43. ⁶⁰ Miller, XI, 43.

CHAPTER XII. THE LAST DAYS OF THE COUNCIL OF TEN

¹ Miller, XV, 134 sqq. ² op. cit., XV, 177 sqq. ³ op. cit., XV, 244 sqq. ⁴ op. cit., XV, 286 sqq. ⁵ op. cit., XV, 340 sqq. ⁶ op. cit., XV, 299. ⁷ op. cit., XV, 367. ⁸ Callwell, II, 174. ⁹ Miller, XV, 368 sqq. ¹⁰ op. cit., XV, 140. ¹¹ op. cit., XV, 141. ¹² op. cit., XV, 192. ¹³ op. cit., XV, 299. ¹⁴ op. cit., XV, 348. ¹⁵ op. cit., XV, 27. ¹⁶ op. cit., XV, 393-4. ¹⁷ op. cit., XV, 394. ¹⁸ *ibid.* ¹⁹ Lapradelle, III, 12-14. ²⁰ Miller, I, 175-6. ²¹ op. cit., VI, Doc. 526. ²² op. cit., XV, 121-2. ²³ op. cit., XV, 138. ²⁴ op. cit., XV, 394. ²⁵ Miller (*Covenant*), I, 90-1. ²⁶ Lansing (*Personal Narrative*), 183-5. ²⁷ Miller (*Covenant*), I, 89. ²⁸ Miller, XV, 393-4. ²⁹ op. cit., XV, 313. ³⁰ op. cit., XV, 384. ³¹ op. cit., XV, 497. ³² op. cit., XV, 144-5. ³³ op. cit., XV, 143. ³⁴ op. cit., XV, 300. ³⁵ op. cit., XV, 364. ³⁶ op. cit., XV, 367. ³⁷ op. cit., XV, 422-31. ³⁸ op. cit., XV, 463 sqq. ³⁹ op. cit., XV, 470-3. ⁴⁰ Lloyd George, I, 397. ⁴¹ House, IV, 367. ⁴² Miller, VI, Docs. 473 and 474. ⁴³ op. cit., I, 162 and VI, Doc. 489. ⁴⁴ House, IV, 402. ⁴⁵ Burnett, I, 56. ⁴⁶ Miller, VI, Docs. 473 and 475; Lloyd George, I, 283-93. ⁴⁷ House, IV, 367. ⁴⁸ Temperley, I, 263. ⁴⁹ House, IV, 402. ⁵⁰ Miller, XV, 475. ⁵¹ Riddell, 36. ⁵² House, IV, 406. ⁵³ Miller, XV, 500. ⁵⁴ House, IV, 367. ⁵⁵ Baker, III, Doc. 1.

CHAPTER XIII. THE COUNCILS OF FOUR AND FIVE

¹ Nicolson, 288. ² Miller, XV, 500. ³ op. cit., XVI, 2. ⁴ op. cit., XIII, 13 and 28. ⁵ op. cit., XIII, 65. ⁶ op. cit., IX, Docs. 877 and 879. ⁷ House, IV, 484-5. ⁸ Miller, VII, Doc. 632. ⁹ Aldrovandi, 213. ¹⁰ op. cit., 14. ¹¹ House, IV, 413. ¹² Tardieu, 101-2. ¹³ Keynes,

26-7. ¹⁴ op. cit., 27-8. ¹⁵ Baker, III, Doc. 1. ¹⁶ Lloyd George, I, 283-4. ¹⁷ Miller, VII, Doc. 709. ¹⁸ Hankey, 301. ¹⁹ Tardieu, 104. ²⁰ Hankey, 301. ²¹ Riddell, 38. ²² Hankey, 301. ²³ Miller, XIX, 136. ²⁴ Parl. Debates, Fifth Series, Vol. 155, Col. 268. ²⁵ Aldrovandi, 14. ²⁶ op. cit., 14-15 and 214. ²⁷ Miller, XVI, 278-83, 393-414, 414-17, 450-86. ²⁸ Hankey, 302. ²⁹ Aldrovandi, 14 sqq. ³⁰ Miller, XIII, 13, 14 and 28. ³¹ op. cit., XV, 509. ³² Lapradelle, III, 435. ³³ Miller, XV, 517. ³⁴ op. cit., XV, 42. ³⁵ Nicolson, 323. ³⁶ Miller, XVI, 434 sqq. ³⁷ op. cit., XV, 517. ³⁸ op. cit., XV, 532. ³⁹ op. cit., XVI, 273. ⁴⁰ op. cit., XVI, 22. ⁴¹ op. cit., XVI, 42. ⁴² *ibid.* ⁴³ op. cit., XVI, 181-94, 195-206, 268-77, 418-23. ⁴⁴ op. cit., XVI, 194. ⁴⁵ op. cit., XV, 252-4. ⁴⁶ op. cit., XVI, 80-1. ⁴⁷ op. cit., XVI, 242-3. ⁴⁸ op. cit., XVI, 318-43. ⁴⁹ I.C., 192. ⁵⁰ House, IV, 471.

CHAPTER XIV. THE GERMAN TREATY

¹ Miller, XV, 3-4. ² op. cit., XV, 12-13. ³ Cmd. 1614, 1922. ⁴ House, IV, 411. ⁵ Miller, VII, Doc. 489. ⁶ op. cit., VIII, Doc. 716. ⁷ op. cit., IX, Doc. 901. ⁸ op. cit., VII, Doc. 704. ⁹ op. cit., XVI, 101-5, 119-30. ¹⁰ op. cit., XIX, 120. ¹¹ op. cit., XV, 528-32. ¹² op. cit., XVI, 45-8. ¹³ Chapter XII. ¹⁴ Miller, XII, 413-5. ¹⁵ op. cit., XV, 384. ¹⁶ op. cit., XVI, 48. ¹⁷ op. cit., XI, 75; XII, 416-34. ¹⁸ op. cit., III, 253. ¹⁹ I.C., 108. ²⁰ Appendix D. ²¹ Miller, XIX, 55 and 151. ²² op. cit., XIX, 139. ²³ op. cit., XVI, 18 sqq. ²⁴ op. cit., XVI, 42. ²⁵ op. cit., XVI, 51 sqq. ²⁶ op. cit., XVI, 90-1. ²⁷ op. cit., XV, 150 and 176. ²⁸ op. cit., XIX, 256-8. ²⁹ op. cit., X, 161-9. ³⁰ Lapradelle, VI, 337 sqq. ³¹ Miller, XV, 295. ³² Lapradelle, VI, 382. ³³ Miller (*Covenant*), I, 502. ³⁴ *ibid.* ³⁵ op. cit., I, 501-3. ³⁶ Miller, XIX, 62-4. ³⁷ op. cit., XV, 497. ³⁸ op. cit., XVI, 160-73. ³⁹ op. cit., XVI, 181-206. ⁴⁰ Shotwell (*I.L.O.*), I, 219. ⁴¹ Miller, XIX, 3. ⁴² op. cit., XVI, 67. ⁴³ op. cit., XVI, 64-9.

CHAPTER XV. VERSAILLES

¹ House, IV, 366-7. ² Luckau, Doc. 22. ³ op. cit., Doc. 23. ⁴ op. cit., Doc. 24. ⁵ Nowak, 181-2. ⁶ Tabouis, 350. ⁷ Luckau, Doc. 27. ⁸ op. cit., 61-2. ⁹ Miller, XX, 149 sqq. ¹⁰ House, IV, 366-7. ¹¹ Miller, XVIII, 117-8. ¹² Lloyd George, I, 675. ¹³ Luckau, 118-21. ¹⁴ Lloyd George, I, 676-7 (and footnote). ¹⁵ Miller, XVIII, 84. ¹⁶ Luckau, 60-1. ¹⁷ Schiff, 32. ¹⁸ Nowak, 227-8. ¹⁹ Berber, I, 57. ²⁰ Lapradelle, XII, 3-4. ²¹ Berber, II, 1638-9. ²² Luckau, 84. ²³ Lapradelle, XII, 29-30. ²⁴ Luckau, 84-5. ²⁵ op. cit., Docs. 56 and 57. ²⁶ Miller, XVI, 394. ²⁷ op. cit., IX, Doc. 949. ²⁸ op. cit., XII, 168-9. ²⁹ op. cit., XII, 168-71. ³⁰ op. cit., XI, 88; XII, 177-80. ³¹ op. cit., XVI, 395-6. ³² Shotwell, 44. ³³ Tardieu, 120. ³⁴ Lloyd George, I, 688. ³⁵ Baker, III, 469-504. ³⁶ Miller, XIX, 83-4 and 90-1. ³⁷ op. cit., XVI, 398. ³⁸ op. cit., XIX, 278-81. ³⁹ Tardieu, 121-2. ⁴⁰ Miller, XVI, 397; XIX, 90-1. ⁴¹ op. cit., 278-81. ⁴² Lapradelle, VI, 441. ⁴³ Temperley,

I, 271. ⁴⁴ Miller, XVI, 395. ⁴⁵ Lapradelle, XII, 239-310. ⁴⁶ Luckau, Doc. 60. ⁴⁷ op. cit., 90. ⁴⁸ Nowak, 262-3. ⁴⁹ Miller, XVI, 399-400. ⁵⁰ Luckau, 107-8. ⁵¹ Nowak, 269-72. ⁵² Miller, XVIII, 534-5. ⁵³ op. cit., XVIII, 532-3. ⁵⁴ Berber, I, 85-7.

CHAPTER XVI. THE AUSTRIAN TREATY

¹ Lapradelle, VI, 382. ² op. cit., IX, 372-6, 440-5. ³ Miller, XV, 36-9. ⁴ op. cit., XV, 10. ⁵ op. cit., XV, 8. ⁶ Almond and Lutz, 254. ⁷ op. cit., 113 and 235. ⁸ op. cit., 237. ⁹ op. cit., 38. ¹⁰ Nicolson, 327. ¹¹ Miller, XVI, 256. ¹² op. cit., XVI, 223-4. ¹³ op. cit., XVI, 224-32 and 234-42. ¹⁴ Nicolson, 328-9. ¹⁵ Miller, XVI, 258-67. ¹⁶ op. cit., XVI, 268-77. ¹⁷ op. cit., XVI, 345-8. ¹⁸ I.C., 194. ¹⁹ Miller, XVI, 386-92. ²⁰ Almond and Lutz, 43. ²¹ Miller, XII, 136-7. ²² op. cit., XI, 82-7. ²³ Almond and Lutz, 240-1. ²⁴ op. cit., 242. ²⁵ op. cit., 241. ²⁶ op. cit., 47-8. ²⁷ op. cit., 38-40. ²⁸ op. cit., 56-7. ²⁹ op. cit., 43-4. ³⁰ op. cit., 45-7. ³¹ op. cit., 241-2. ³² op. cit., 50. ³³ op. cit., 51. ³⁴ op. cit., 52. ³⁵ op. cit., 485-6. ³⁶ op. cit., 486-7 and 599-600. ³⁷ op. cit., 65. ³⁸ op. cit., 66. ³⁹ I.C., 200. ⁴⁰ *ibid.* (Appendix B). ⁴¹ Almond and Lutz, 353-4. ⁴² op. cit., 299 and 469. ⁴³ op. cit., 10 and 594-5. ⁴⁴ op. cit., 686-7. ⁴⁵ op. cit., 68-9. ⁴⁶ op. cit., 212-15. ⁴⁷ I.C., 201. ⁴⁸ Almond and Lutz, 69-71 and 215-18. ⁴⁹ op. cit., 71. ⁵⁰ op. cit., 72. ⁵¹ op. cit., 73-5. ⁵² Miller, XVI, 497-8. ⁵³ op. cit., XVI, 498-9. ⁵⁴ op. cit., XVI, 521. ⁵⁵ Almond and Lutz, 561 (footnote).

CHAPTER XVII. THE END OF THE CONFERENCE

¹ I.C., 199. ² I.C., 200. ³ I.C., 201. ⁴ I.C., 200. ⁵ Almond and Lutz, 9 (and footnote). ⁶ I.C., 201. ⁷ Temperley, I, 326. ⁸ Miller, XVI, 455. ⁹ op. cit., XVI, 487-8. ¹⁰ op. cit., XVI, 502 and 530. ¹¹ Almond and Lutz, 324. ¹² Miller, XVI, 130-6. ¹³ op. cit., XVI, 432. ¹⁴ op. cit., XVIII, 505. ¹⁵ I.C., 199. ¹⁶ Miller, X, 321 sqq. ¹⁷ op. cit., XVI, 531. ¹⁸ op. cit., XVI, 542. ¹⁹ op. cit., XVI, 501-2 and 505-6. ²⁰ op. cit., XIII, 15. ²¹ Almond and Lutz, 9-10. ²² House, V, 501-5. ²³ I.C., 200 and 201. ²⁴ Miller, XVI, 490. ²⁵ op. cit., XVI, 502. ²⁶ op. cit., XVI, 508 and 525. ²⁷ op. cit., XVI, 530. ²⁸ Temperley, IV, 413. ²⁹ Miller, XIII, 488-9. ³⁰ Temperley, IV, 414-15. ³¹ House and Seymour, 163-4. ³² Miller, XIII, 373. ³³ op. cit., XVI, 493-5. ³⁴ Temperley, I, 342-5. ³⁵ Miller, XVI, 496-7 and 504. ³⁶ op. cit., XVI, 500-1 and 503-5; Temperley, I, 347. ³⁷ House and Seymour, 165. ³⁸ Temperley, I, 348-50. ³⁹ Nicolson, 343. ⁴⁰ Miller, XVI, 463. ⁴¹ op. cit., XVI, 509-10. ⁴² Almond and Lutz, 12 (and footnote). ⁴³ op. cit., 11 (and footnote). ⁴⁴ Deák, 204-11. ⁴⁵ Almond and Lutz, 16, 18 and 19. ⁴⁶ Hankey, 305-6.

APPENDIX A

THE MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL OF TEN AND THE COUNCIL OF FIVE

THE British minutes of the 'I.C.' series have an unbroken numerical sequence from 12th January to 2nd July 1919, and cover all the meetings of the Council of Ten and of the Foreign Ministers, together with the first two meetings of the Heads of Delegations, on 1st and 2nd July. Enlarged meetings of the Council of Ten (Supreme War Council meetings) and joint sessions of the 'Four' and 'Five' are included in the same numerical series, which itself continued the numbering of the war-time gatherings.

During the first ten days of the Council of Ten, 12th-22nd January, the Americans produced their own record of the proceedings and began their own 'B.C.' series of numbers. There was some confusion as to numbers during this period, because the Americans did not sufficiently distinguish between morning and afternoon meetings. Mr. D. H. Miller did not receive copies of these minutes which are, however, available at the Hoover War Library. From 23rd January there was only one set of English minutes, that issued by the British Delegation. The Americans accepted these for their own records, just altering the title page and including in their own numerical series. For nearly a month they attempted to list separately those meetings of the Council of Ten which could be regarded as of the Supreme War Council. By the beginning of February it had been found desirable, for the purposes of indexing, to have one continuous series of numbers for all the minutes of the Council of Ten, and at that stage numbers in the 'B.C.' series were retrospectively given to meetings previously listed in the 'S.W.C.' series only.

The Americans also began a fresh numerical series, 'F.M.', to cover the meetings of the Council of Foreign Ministers, and this included the first three meetings of the Heads of Delegations, on 1st, 2nd and 5th July. Joint sessions of the 'Four' and 'Five' were listed separately, in continuation of the 'B.C.' numbers.

DOCUMENTATION

Almond and Lutz, *Introduction to a Bibliography of the Paris Peace Conference*.

Miller, *Diary*, XIV, Prefatory Note.

op. cit., XVII, pp. 6-7 and 165-171 (American Bulletins, 11, 73 and 73A).

APPENDIX B MEETINGS OF THE COUNCIL OF TEN

Date	I.C.	B.C.	S.W.C.	M ¹	Date	I.C.	B.C.	S.W.C.	M ¹
Sat. 12th Jan.	2.30	A1	S.W.C.		Sat. 8th Feb.	136			
M. 13th "	4.0		S.W.C.		M. 10th "	137	3.0	S.W.C.	M
W. 15th "	2.30	1A	S.W.C.		T. 11th "	138	3.0	S.W.C.	M
Th. 16th "	4.0	12			W. 12th "	139	11.0		M
F. 17th "	10.30	2+			Th. 13th "	140	3.0	S.W.C.	M
M. 20th "	2.30	3			F. 14th "	141	3.0	S.W.C.	M
T. 21st "	10.30	4A			Sat. 15th "	142	6.30	S.W.C.	M
W. 22nd "	3.0	5			M. 17th "	143	3.0		M
Th. 23rd "	10.30	6			T. 18th "	144	3.0	S.W.C.	M
F. 24th "	3.0	6A			F. 21st "	145	3.0		M
M. 27th "	10.30	7	S.W.C. ²		Sat. 22nd "	146	3.0		M
T. 28th "	11.0	7+			M. 24th "	147	3.0		M
W. 29th "	3.15	8	S.W.C. ²	M	T. 25th "	148	3.0		M
Th. 30th "	10.30	8A ⁴			W. 26th "	149	3.0		M
F. 31st "	12.15	9			Th. 27th "	150	3.0		M
Sat. 1st Feb.	3.0	10	S.W.C. ²	M	Sat. 1st Mar.	151	3.0		M
M. 3rd "	10.30	11			M. 3rd "	152	3.0		M
T. 4th "	3.0	12			W. 5th "	153	3.0	S.W.C. ²	M
W. 5th "	11.0	13			Th. 6th "	154	3.0	S.W.C. ²	M
Th. 6th "	4.0	14			F. 7th "	155	3.0	S.W.C.	M
F. 7th "	11.0	15			Sat. 8th "	156	3.0	S.W.C.	M
M. 8th "	3.30	16			M. 10th "	157	3.0	S.W.C.	M
T. 9th "	11.0	17			T. 11th "	158	3.0	S.W.C.	M
W. 10th "	3.30	18			W. 12th "	159	3.0	S.W.C.	M
Th. 11th "	3.0	19			Sat. 15th "	160	3.0	S.W.C.	M
F. 12th "	3.0	20			M. 17th "	161	3.0	S.W.C.	M
Sat. 13th "	11.0	21			W. 19th "	162	3.0	S.W.C.	M
M. 14th "	11.0	22			F. 21st "	163	3.0	S.W.C. ²	M
T. 15th "	3.0	23			Sat. 22nd "	164	11.0		M
W. 16th "	3.0	24	S.W.C.	M	M. 24th "	165	4.0		M
Th. 17th "	3.30	25				166			M
F. 18th "						167			M

¹ 'M' indicates that the minutes are printed in Miller.

² American Bulletin No. 73 wrongly ascribes this meeting

³ Not listed as meetings of S.W.C. in American Series.

⁴ American Bulletin No. 73 does not list this.

⁵ S.W.C. in American Series.

APPENDIX C MEETINGS OF THE COUNCIL OF FIVE

Date		I.C.	F.M.	B.C. ¹	M ²	Date		I.C.	F.M.	B.C. ¹	M ²
Th. 27th March	11.30	168	1		M	M. 12th May	4. 0	185			M
F. 28th "	11. 0	169	2		M	W. 14th "	3. 0	186	15	61	M
T. 1st April	3. 0	170	3		M	F. 16th "	3. 0	187	16		M
T. 15th "	3. 0	171	4		M	M. 19th. "	4.30	188	17		M
W. 16th "	4. 0	172		58	M	T. 20th "	3. 0	189	18		M
Th. 17th "	3. 0	173	5		M	F. 23rd "	3. 0	190	19		M
Sat. 19th "	3. 0	174	6		M	Sat. 24th "	3. 0	191	20		M
M. 21st "	3. 0	175	7		M	T. 3rd June	3. 0	192	21		
W. 23rd "	3. 0	176	8		M	W. 4th "	3. 0	193	22		
Sat. 26th "	3. 0	177	9		M	W. 11th "	10. 0	194	23		
W. 30th "	3. 0	178	10		M	Th. 12th "	10. 0	195	24		M
Th. 1st May	4. 0	179		59	M	T. 17th "	11. 0	196		62	M
F. 2nd "	5. 0	180		60	M	W. 18th "	3. 0	197	25		M
Sat. 3rd "	4. 0	181	11		M	Th. 19th "	3. 0	198	26		M
Th. 8th "	4. 0	182	12		M	W. 25th "	3. 0	199	27		
F. 9th "	3. 0	183	13		M	T. 1st July	4. 0	200	28 ³		
Sat. 10th "	4. 0	184	14		M	W. 2nd "	3.30	201	29 ³		
						Sat. 5th "		201A		63 ³	

¹ Joint meetings of the Premiers and Foreign Ministers, regarded by the Americans as continuing the Council of Ten series.

² 'M' indicates that the minutes are printed in Müller.

³ These meetings of 1st, 2nd and 5th July were in reality the first meetings of the Council of the Heads of Delegations.

APPENDIX D

PARIS PEACE CONFERENCE 1919

RULES OF PROCEDURE

(These Rules, which were adopted by the Council of Ten during the first week of its existence, were based on a French draft appended to the November Plan and the Tardieu Plan of 5th January. The bracketed numbers refer to the order in the original French draft.)

- I. (1) The Conference, summoned with a view to lay down the conditions of peace, in the first place by peace preliminaries and later by a definitive Treaty of Peace, shall include the representatives of the Allied or Associated belligerent Powers.

The belligerent Powers with general interests (the United States of America, the British Empire, France, Italy and Japan) shall attend all sessions and commissions.

The belligerent Powers with special interests (Belgium, Brazil, the British Dominions and India, China, Cuba, Greece, Guatemala, Haiti, the Hedjaz, Honduras, Liberia, Nicaragua, Panama, Poland, Portugal, Roumania, Serbia, Siam, and the Czechoslovak Republic) shall attend sessions at which questions concerning them are discussed.

Powers having broken off diplomatic relations with the enemy Powers (Bolivia, Ecuador, Peru, and Uruguay) shall attend sessions at which questions interesting them will be discussed.

Neutral Powers and States in process of formation shall, on being summoned by the Powers with general interests, be heard, either orally or in writing, at sessions devoted especially to the examination of questions in which they are directly concerned, and only in so far as these questions are concerned.

- II. (2) The Powers shall be represented by Plenipotentiary Delegates to the number of—

Five for the United States of America, the British Empire, France, Italy, Japan;

Three for Belgium, Brazil, Serbia;

Two for China, Greece, the Hedjaz, Poland, Portugal, Roumania, Siam, and the Czechoslovak Republic;

One for Cuba, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Liberia, Nicaragua, and Panama;

One for Bolivia, Ecuador, Peru, and Uruguay.

The British Dominions and India shall be represented as follows—

Two Delegates each for Canada, Australia, South Africa, and India (including the native States);
One Delegate for New Zealand.

Each Delegation shall be entitled to set up a panel, but the number of Plenipotentiaries shall not exceed the figures given above.

The representatives of the Dominions (including Newfoundland) and of India can, moreover, be included in the representation of the British Empire by means of the panel system.

Montenegro shall be represented by one Delegate, but the manner of his appointment shall not be decided until the present political situation of that country becomes clear.

The conditions governing the representation of Russia shall be settled by the Conference when Russian affairs come up for discussion.

- III. Each Delegation of Plenipotentiaries may be accompanied by duly accredited Technical Delegates and by two shorthand writers.

The Technical Delegates may attend sessions in order to supply information when called upon. They may be asked to speak in order to give necessary explanations.

- IV. (3) The order of precedence shall follow the alphabetical order of the Powers in French.

- V. (4) The Conference shall be opened by the President of the French Republic. The President of the French Council of Ministers shall thereupon provisionally take the chair.

The credentials of members present shall at once be examined by a Committee composed of one Plenipotentiary for each of the Great Allied or Associated Powers.

- VI. (5) At the first meeting the permanent President and four Vice-Presidents shall be elected, *the latter chosen* from among the Plenipotentiaries of the Great Powers in alphabetical order.

- VII. (6) A Secretariat chosen outside the ranks of the Plenipotentiaries, consisting of one representative each of the United States of America, the British Empire, France, Italy and Japan, shall be submitted for the approval of the Conference by the President, who shall be in control of and responsible for it.

The Secretariat shall draw up the protocols of the sessions, classify the archives, provide for the administrative organization of the Conference and, generally, ensure the regular and punctual working of the services entrusted to it.

The head of the Secretariat shall be responsible for the safe custody of the protocols and archives.

The archives shall be accessible at all times to members of the Conference.

- VIII. (7) Publicity shall be given to the proceedings by means of official *communiqués* prepared by the Secretariat and made public. In case of disagreement as to the wording of such *communiqués*, the matter shall be referred to the Chief Plenipotentiaries or their representatives.

- (8) [A Rule relating to the official language of the Conference, appearing in the French draft was omitted from the final version.]

- IX. (9) All documents to be incorporated in the protocols must be supplied in writing by the Plenipotentiaries originally responsible for them.

No document or proposal may be so supplied except by a Plenipotentiary or in his name.

- X. (10) With a view to facilitate discussion, any Plenipotentiary wishing to propose a resolution must give the President twenty-four hours' notice thereof, except in the case of proposals connected with the order of the day and arising from the actual discussion.

Exceptions may, however, be made to this rule in the case of amendments or secondary questions which do not constitute actual proposals.

- XI. (11) All petitions, memoranda, observations and documents addressed to the Conference by any persons other than the Plenipotentiaries must be received and classified by the Secretariat.

Such of these communications as are of any political interest shall be briefly summarized in a list circulated to all the Plenipotentiaries. Supplementary editions of this list shall be issued as such communications are received.

All these documents shall be deposited in the archives.

- XII. (12) All questions to be decided shall be discussed at a first and second reading: the former shall afford occasion for a general discussion for the purpose of arriving at an agreement on points of principle; the second reading shall provide an opportunity of discussing details.

- XIII. (13) The Plenipotentiaries shall be entitled, subject to the approval of the Conference, to authorize their Technical Delegates to submit direct any technical explanations considered desirable regarding any particular question.

If the Conference shall think fit, the study of any particular question from the technical point of view may be entrusted to a Committee composed of Technical Delegates, who shall be instructed to present a report and suggest solutions.

- (14) [A Rule providing for unanimity in making decisions subject to certain exceptions, appeared in the French draft, but this was omitted by the Council of Ten.]

- XIV. (15) The protocols drawn up by the Secretariat shall be printed and circulated in proof to the Delegates with the least possible delay.

To save time, this circulation of the protocols in advance shall take the place of reading them at the beginning of the sessions. Should no alterations be demanded by the Plenipotentiaries the text shall be considered as approved, and deposited in the archives.

Should any alteration be called for it shall be read aloud by the President at the beginning of the following session.

The whole of the protocol shall, however, be read, if one of the Plenipotentiary members shall so request.

- XV. (16) A Committee shall be formed to draft the motions adopted.

This Committee shall deal only with questions which have been decided; its sole task shall be to draw up the texts of the decisions adopted and to present them to the Conference for approval.

It shall consist of five members who shall not be Plenipotentiary Delegates, and shall comprise one representative each from the United States of America, the British Empire, France, Italy and Japan.

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